

THE

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THE LIBERATION SOCIETY.

SOME little time ago it was remarked, we believe, by a conspicuous member of the Episcopal Bench, that the protracted absorption of the national mind with the Eastern problem would stave off for some time the serious consideration of the disestablishment question. Such an observation implies no small distrust of the vitality of a State Church, the stability of which is thus made dependent upon the chapter of accidents. But, in a limited sense, the remark is obviously true. The object of the Liberation Society, like every other domestic question, is for the time being thrust into the background. The public interest in it has not so much vanished as that it remains in a dormant state. No reforms, however desirable, can gain attentive hearing while South-Eastern Europe is in course of reconstruction, and while our Government are taking up such an attitude in the matter as involves at least the possibility of a war with Russia, if not of a European conflagration.

Whether this state of feverish excitement lasts for a longer or a shorter period, it is sure to be succeeded by a revival of interest in questions of domestic importance. There are already palpable signs of national weariness and alarm at the position which Lord Beaconsfield's Cabinet has chosen to assume as the obtrusive champion of obsolete European treaties, and of the fearful risks which it involves. The continued paralysis of industry, which is beginning to affect all classes interested in trade and commerce, and the prodigal war expenditure, which will have to be provided for by supplementary estimates and increased taxation, must, ere long, have a sobering effect on the community, which will by no means be diminished by the present repression of the public opinion to suit the aims of the Tory party. Though the combustible materials are so heaped up that the risk of war is serious, we would fain assume that it will be averted. But even if so great a calamity is spared us, it is hardly possible that in the final settlement of the Eastern Question, our Government will gain so brilliant a diplomatic triumph as to vindicate their policy in the eyes of the nation, and enable them to appeal with confidence to the verdict of the country. The warning they have had of the changes of public feeling will make them hesitate to go speedily to a general election, while the burdens they are laying upon the shoulders of the people are preparing for the reaction which "looms in the distance." He must be blind to the signs of the time, who now expects that the Prime Minister's foreign policy of provocation and menace, whatever its immediate issue, will secure him a new and protracted lease of power. The supremacy of the Premier and his party might for awhile be prolonged by war, but then only to result in their more signal overthrow.

Meanwhile the Liberal party continues weak and disorganised. Events may before long

place it in a new and more commanding position; but at present its leaders fear to lead, and refrain from adopting an acceptable programme. All its component parts are more or less paralysed and inactive, except the advocates of religious equality. They regard this as a golden opportunity to sow the seeds of their principles broadcast throughout the country. As will be seen from the report presented to the Council of the Liberation Society, there has been no abatement of their work, even during the past year of feverish excitement on the Eastern Question. They have never ceased to carry out Mr. Gladstone's advice to endeavour to convert the nation to their views. By multitudinous meetings and lectures in small as well as large towns and villages, by publications suited to all sections of the community—for the well-to-do and educated as well as the humble and uninstructed—they have made disestablishment everywhere familiar, and vindicated its justice, safety, and expediency. Week by week, and month by month, this teaching process has been carried out. Ecclesiastical events have vastly helped them, sections of the Church clergy have espoused their cause, and the laity, alarmed at the rapid strides of Sacerdotalism, and discouraged by the signal failure of all efforts to check it, are coming to regard disestablishment with a less negative feeling than that of resignation; while the society has not hesitated courageously to indicate in its published "Suggestions" a definite form in which both disestablishment and disendowment might be legislatively realised, without detriment to the Church of England, and with inestimable advantage to the whole community.

In studying that report and in reading the speeches of members of the Council, and the stirring addresses delivered at the crowded meeting held in the Metropolitan Tabernacle last night, it is as difficult to realise the fact that we are passing through a period of general political apathy, as it is easy to accept the belief that all this quiet but persistent work is so indoctrinating the public mind that, at the fitting time, it will eventuate in ripened and active convictions, which must command the chief force of the Liberal party. The leaders of that party may be timid and hesitating, but they will sooner or later be carried onward by the advancing tide. Not an election occurs, but the disestablishment question, through the agency of friends or foes, comes to the front. Scotland is ripe for decision on the subject. It is the one instrument by which the Liberal party expect to secure a signal triumph north of the Tweed whenever the country is appealed to, and we have the assurance of Lord Hartington that when Scotch opinion is ripe for a decision, he will be prepared to give effect to its aspirations. In fact, Scotch disestablishment already figures in the programme of the Liberal party of the future, and must become a pressing practical question after the next general election. The campaign once entered upon cannot stop short with the triumph of the Free Churches of Scotland, and will be prosecuted upon wider issues.

But without looking too far ahead, the friends of religious equality have an additional motive for unremitting perseverance in the knowledge that they have to take up a defensive as well as an aggressive attitude—to contend for what they have formerly realised as well as for that which they still claim at the hands of justice. We have seen with what tenacity the Church has striven to retain the monopoly of education. We all know the severe conflict waged by the Free Churches of England to maintain their

free action against landlord and clerical influences in the rural districts. And the recent decision in the Hertford College case shows how easy it is for courts of law to emasculate an Act of Parliament which was thought to have placed the Universities on a secure national footing. Such things enforce the imperative necessity of striking at the root of the Upas tree that poisons the ecclesiastical atmosphere of England. Only by that means can this bitter and chronic warfare be ended. In their report, the Executive Committee of the Liberation Society, *apropos* of the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts fifty years ago, remark that since that time Roman Catholics have been emancipated; Jews admitted to Parliament; the laws relating to births, marriages, and deaths have been amended; compulsory Church-rates abolished; the national Universities thrown open to all, without sectarian distinctions; and the Church of Ireland completely disestablished. Each of these changes has, to a greater or less extent, recognised the principle of religious equality. Each has been followed by beneficial results. These, indeed, are substantial triumphs, but they have cost incredible effort, and in wresting them from the State-Church an amount of energy has been expended which might otherwise have been devoted to more constructive objects. But while the paralysing influence of the Establishment pervades the mind and conscience and political institutions of the nation, the Liberation Society cannot rest till it is exorcised. Minor questions have now been removed out of the way, except perhaps the burials grievance, which the clergy prefer to identify with their ecclesiastical supremacy; and the tide of events, equally with the slow but sure growth of opinion, strengthens the assurance that the doom of the British State Churches is assured. It is only a question of time, the length of which depends less perhaps upon unforeseen events than upon the zeal and devotion of the supporters of the Liberation Society.

MR. FAWCETT'S PROTEST.

AMONGST many valuable qualities Mr. Fawcett is pre-eminently characterised by one which has of late been conspicuous by its absence amongst what may be called the official section of the Opposition. He is marked by a keen insight into the importance of a principle, together with a courage which calculates no odds, and cares nothing for immediate consequences when he sees that a vital principle is concerned. It would seem that, if the tactics of Monday evening had been left entirely to the singularly cautious judgment of the official Liberal leader, nothing more would have been secured than a formal question and an equally formal reply. But Mr. Fawcett felt that the despatch of Indian troops to Europe involved a very great, possibly even a vital, change in the economy of a worldwide Empire, while the fact that this bold stroke was accomplished without a word to Parliament, and even under cover of assurances that the situation was unaltered, gave a still more sinister aspect to a doubtful policy. The result showed that in Parliamentary strategy, as elsewhere, straightforwardness, decision, and courage are often the soundest prudence. The general tone of the House showed such unmistakeable sympathy with the protest of the hon. member for Hackney that it may be counted as a decided check to the high-handed proceeding of the Ministry. Scarcely a voice was raised

in support of the Government. They received warnings even from constant supporters, and Sir William Harcourt lent all the weight of his learning and authority to an earnest and serious rebuke. He insisted on the doctrine that the army is not to be employed without the knowledge and consent of Parliament, and he urged that the employment of the vast hordes of an Imperial dependency, for whose pay and expenses no estimates had been offered, for whose government no Mutiny Act had been passed, involved a critical, if not a revolutionary, infraction of that time-honoured doctrine. "If," said he, "the Chancellor of the Exchequer were in his place to assert that what had been done was a thing which could be or ought to be done without any communication to Parliament, then the House was in face of a grave constitutional question." Of course he bore in mind the promise of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to bring up an estimate, but it was not to be forgotten that, under conceivable circumstances, no estimate might be necessary. "It might be that the Indian revenues would be found adequate to supply these forces themselves, and that the Government might employ the surplus of those revenues to furnishing the Crown with an army for European or for English purposes." In a later portion of his speech he hinted pretty plainly at the objectionableness of employing in a time of peace measures that could at best be justified only by the emergencies of war. And this is an objection which might be taken to other proceedings of the Ministry besides their despatch of Indian troops.

The organs of St. Jingo are, of course, amazed at the simplicity or perversity of both Mr. Fawcett and Sir William Harcourt in objecting to anything that an immaculate and infallible Government—or rather we should say Premier—is pleased to do. They are not quite satisfied, indeed, with Sir Stafford Northcote, but that is because he is not sufficiently indifferent to the forms of Constitutional Government. They have an uncomfortable feeling that he is [a "sort of Lord Derby in embryo." He is weak enough to indulge in "smooth words and over pacific sayings." Hence the organs in question are not particularly concerned to defend Sir Stafford Northcote. They would, indeed, with complacency consign him with other preceding Jonahs to the deep if only a heaven-sent Premier could manage helm, sail, and tackling of the Government vessel by himself. It was because of "smooth words and over-pacific sayings" that the Opposition felt as though they were deceived by the movement of Indian troops, which "was simply a fresh measure of preparation for the support of an unchanged Ministerial policy." "No change in our policy!" exclaimed Mr. Fawcett, "If the bringing of Indian troops into Europe, to be engaged in a European contest, be not a change in our policy, I do not know what a change in our policy is. There could not be a change of policy which could raise a more important constitutional question affecting this country, or a question of more vital importance affecting the Government and the finances of India." Mr. Fawcett then proceeded to point out the constitutional significance of the Mutiny Bill and the scrupulousness with which the number of men to form the standing army is voted every year. It is quite conceivable, at least, that these guarantees might be neutralised by the facility with which any number of soldiers, up to half-a-million or so, might be drafted from India into Europe or even into Great Britain itself.

It is easy to ridicule such fears, and there are certainly no grounds for them apparent in the immediate future. But the Imperial policy of Lord Beaconsfield is insidiously making such changes in the relations of the Crown to its external dependencies, and, indeed, to the English Constitution in its received interpretation that it is impossible to tell what contingencies might arise in the future. There are grave social problems yet to be settled among ourselves no less than on the continent of

Europe. The bad policy of allying Crown and mob to make passion victorious over reason already shows ominous signs of evil fruits in the rowdy violence that overbears discussion, whether on matters of foreign policy or on vital questions of home politics like that of Church and State. It is not at all impossible that at some future day public feeling might be keenly and profoundly divided on issues going even more deeply into the bases of our constitution than our first Reform Bill. The Tories of that time were half disposed to have recourse to violence then, and they would no doubt have received great encouragement from the brainless devotees of monarchic superstition. If at that time it had been as easy as it is now to land a quarter-of-a-million of men from India, and if there had been in existence a sinister genius capable of the conception, it is more than possible that we should have relapsed into despotism. Historians tell us that one great cause of the early development of Constitutionalism in England was the loss of our Continental dominions, which deprived the Crown of a dangerous weapon for the subjugation of popular liberties. Taking into consideration the enormously increased facilities of transport in these times, it is not too much to say, that to bring a hundred thousand men from from India now would be as easy as to have brought ten thousand from Normandy in the thirteenth century. We hold, then, that there are very sufficient reasons for looking with grave jealousy on this sensational stroke of policy, nor are we at all satisfied that the explanations offered on Tuesday night have removed the grounds of Mr. Fawcett's protest or Sir William Harcourt's criticism.

THE DECISION IN THE HERTFORD COLLEGE CASE.

ON the principle that "when things are at the worst they mend," the friends of religious equality may be satisfied even with the decision of the Court of Appeal in the Hertford College case. It was possible that the case might have been disposed of on merely technical grounds; and that—as is the habit of judges—the Court might have decided that Mr. Tillyard was not entitled to a mandamus; without going beyond that point, and expressing an opinion on any but the least important issues. In that case, the conclusion would have been one in which nothing was concluded, and the object of the litigation would not have been fully achieved. That evil, at least, has been escaped. The four judges have shirked nothing; but have, without hesitation, driven "a coach and six" through the University Tests Abolition Act; the driver, by the strange irony of fate, being Lord Coleridge, who long fought for the Tests Bill, and afterwards helped to get it passed into law.

We shall leave it to legal minds to discuss the purely legal aspects of the judgment, and to say whose views are the soundest—those of Justices Mellor and Lush, or those of Lord Coleridge, and Lords Justices Bramwell, Brett, and Baggallay. We are concerned only with the practical results, both immediate and remote, of this legal conflict, and these we proceed to point out with as much brevity and simplicity as the subject will permit.

Some of the questions decided are of an accidental, or subsidiary kind, and may be passed by for the better understanding of the points which are of vital importance. It is ruled that Mr. Tillyard pursued a wrong course, in not presenting himself to the authorities of Hertford College for examination for the fellowship he desired to obtain; though one of the Queen's Bench judges thought it "bordered on the ludicrous" to say that he might have been examined had he chosen, when he was expressly told that, in any case, he would not be elected, because he was not an Episcopalian, as was required by the terms of the trust creating the fellowship. As it has turned out, the result would have been just the same whether he went through the form of examination, or not. The question whether an application for a mandamus to compel the college to proceed to a fresh exami-

nation, or whether an appeal to the visitor is the proper remedy, is a legal question, which we need not now discuss. So also is the further question, whether the Act which converted Magdalen Hall into Hertford College subjected the latter to all the provisions of the University Tests Abolition Act. It was supposed that, when there was inserted in the Hertford College Bill a clause providing that "nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to repeal any of the provisions of the University Tests Act, 1871," sufficient precaution had been taken to ensure the placing of the new college in the same legal position as the old hall; but, as the Court of Appeal has declared that new endowments do not come within the operation of the Tests Act, nothing would have been secured if the decision had been that Hertford College and Magdalen Hall were to be treated, in all respects, as one and the same institution.

The court has taken far broader grounds in disposing of the matter than those involved in these particular questions, and has done so that the college "may know their position"; and if in that respect it has done the college a service, it has done a similar service to the opponents of ecclesiastical tests; because they too now know their position in the matter, and will be able to act accordingly.

It will be remembered that the Act of 1871 declared in the preamble that it was expedient that the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Durham, with the colleges and halls "now subsisting therein," should be "rendered freely accessible to the nation"; and that for that purpose "divers restrictions, tests, and disabilities" should be removed. It was, therefore, enacted that hereafter no person on taking a degree, or on exercising any right or privilege, or on taking any office in the Universities or colleges "subsisting at the time of the passing of the Act," should subscribe any formula of faith, or make any declaration respecting his religious belief, or to attend any form of worship, or belong to a particular church.

In the opinion of the court, this provision is confined, not merely to the colleges subsisting at the time of the passing of the Act, but to the endowments existing at that time. These are the words of the judgment on this point:—

We are clearly of opinion that the University Tests Act does not of itself prevent the erection in the Universities of fresh colleges, the endowments of which may be confined to the members of a particular religious community. It does not appear to have been the intention of Parliament that no endowments for the future should be allowed to be erected in favour of particular forms of religious belief. The Act provided that the wishes of founders, expressed, speaking generally, centuries ago, should not now prevail in a state of things altogether different which could not have been foreseen, and which, if it could have been, might have modified the expression of their wishes. But it was to existing endowments only that its operation was expressly confined.

The effect of this is very obvious. While the old endowments will be available for all, without sectarian distinctions, anybody may create new sectarian endowments and offices, in connection with either new colleges, or colleges "subsisting at the time of the passing of the Act." What may follow is equally obvious. By means of new fellowships the government of existing colleges may be kept in the hands of a denominational majority, or a minority may be converted into a majority. And by means of new colleges connected with the University, and having their share in its government, the University itself may, as regards offices, spirit, and management, remain practically in the hands of those whose pecuniary means are equal to their zeal for denominational education. Well, therefore, may the Tory *Manchester Courier* gleefully declare that "it is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance to members of the Church of England" of this decision, since it dispels the notion that the passing of the Tests Act has divorced the Church from the Universities, and made them unsectarian institutions." This notion, it says, has "happily received its *quietus*."

But the judgment does not stop there, but has, in our opinion, a tendency to imperil even so much of the Tests Act as it leaves untouched, and therefore apparently safe. For, supposing that Hertford College had been an

old college—that the endowment creating the fellowship had been an old endowment, and that the authorities had, nevertheless, put out an advertisement similar to that against the legality of which Mr. Tillyard protested, which was, in effect, that “no Dissenter need apply,” would a court of law have interfered in that case? The answer is so important that it had better be given in the language of the court:—

There is an absolute discretion to elect such person as the college considers best qualified to promote the objects of sound religion and education. This is a delicate duty, and it is a moral duty, in the discharge of which the conscience is bound. Nor is there any reason to suppose that since the Tests Act the duty has not been discharged with honour and integrity. But the election being thus discretionary, and not the mere legal consequence and result of examination, there has been a legal election of a duly qualified candidate, the office therefore is full, and on that ground alone there can be no mandamus to elect. It was urged that this line of reasoning seems to show that the authorities of subsisting colleges which are within the Tests Act may evade its provisions with impunity. So they may, if they choose to evade plain duties which bind in honour and in conscience, and hold their peace and disregard their moral obligations. But it is hardly right to suppose that honourable men will thus act in violation of conscientious obligations, and if they do so Parliament would not hesitate to interfere, and to convert a moral obligation into a legal duty which could be enforced. But that is no reason why courts of law should do what Parliament has abstained from doing. And strong reasons might be given why it would not be desirable or convenient to bring college elections into courts of law. In this view there is no ground for a mandamus.

The effect of this is, that if college authorities choose to set at naught the requirements of the Tests Act, by refusing to elect qualified Nonconformists, the law is not at present strong enough to prevent it. It is not, it is said, to be supposed that they will evade plain duties, and violate conscientious obligations; but if they do Parliament would not hesitate to interfere, to convert a moral into a legal obligation. The comment of the *Times* on this is natural enough:—“It is strange to find in this part of the judgment of the court an elaborate argument that the discretion of examiners for fellowships is a matter too delicate for the cognisance of a court of law followed up by a declaration that, if necessary, a court of law would certainly be required by Parliament to take cognisance of it.”

This, however, is not the only inconsistency in this judgment which may be pointed out; but as the Court of Appeal has thus referred to Parliament, as the quarter to which those who are dissatisfied with its views must look for satisfaction, their duty is clear. It has happened now, as it has happened before, that the Legislature, after having conceded a sound principle, has applied it incompletely and bunglingly, and so has had to do some of its work over again. It has done so in this instance. If, as the *Times* says, “the spirit of denominationalism may have been expelled in front, but it returns to the Universities by the back door,” a new effort will now be needed to bolt and bar the back entrance, as well as to make the front more secure also.

MR. CROSS AT PRESTON.

FOR some reasons the recent speeches of the Home Secretary are more calculated than those of any other member of the Government to carry despair to the hearts of the friends of peace. For not without reason Mr. Cross has been looked upon as the strongest element of practical common-sense in the Government. Where home affairs are concerned he has shown a keen feeling for the practical interests of humanity. And always making allowance for that excessive centralising tendency too characteristic of recent English government, we may say that few men have shown a sounder appreciation of the proportionate importance to be attached to the most pressing social reforms affecting the interests of the masses. That such a man, affecting no flights of genius, caring generally for the most prosaic interests of life, should be translated out of himself by wordy sentiment, and driven to assume a bellicose swagger most uncongenial and unnatural to him, is an overwhelming testimony to the potency of the magic spells of that personal Government under which, for our sins, we are condemned to live, or, as seems not unlikely

now, to die. From Mr. Cross we might at least have expected a plain statement of the issue on which we are threatened with war, and also a practical argument justifying the preference of so dread an arbitrament rather than that of such a Conference as our Government refuses. At one place in his second speech he seems to be coming to the point. He boldly accepts Mr. Chamberlain's question:—“Before you go to war ought you not to make up your mind that there is an object for which you want to go to war?” But when we look eagerly for his answer we are profoundly disappointed by its vagueness. He seems to have no notion of the clearness and definiteness requisite in any satisfactory answer to such a question. All that he gives us is a general reference to the treaties of 1856 and 1871, which treaties, he tells us, ought not to be set aside by the arbitrary will of Russia. But this tells us nothing. We are not aware of the existence of any party, or even of any individual who is in the slightest degree disposed to maintain that these treaties ought to be set aside by the arbitrary will of Russia. Russia does not propose this herself. Why is the treaty of San Stefano openly called a “preliminary” treaty? Surely as an acknowledgment on the part of Russia that the final arrangements must be discussed by the Powers who signed the treaties of Paris and London. On the other hand Mr. Cross himself does not dream that those instruments can survive unmodified. He says, “the Government are quite willing to admit that the war which has taken place must be seriously taken into consideration”; “that Russia must, of course, have her compensation,” an admission for which he has been severely scolded by the *Pall Mall Gazette*; that the “object of Her Majesty's Government is not the independence and not the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.” Here then there is no obvious or substantial incompatibility between the demands of Russia on the one hand, and the requirements of our Government on the other. That points of disagreement would be sure to arise in the course of negotiation is, of course, not only likely but certain. This, however, is the case in every international conference. The skill of diplomacy is shown in surmounting such disagreements, and until we know definitely what these points of difference may be it is impossible to form any estimate of the chances of diplomacy in this particular case.

So far then Mr. Cross fails utterly and, we must add, ignominiously to answer the plain question of Mr. Chamberlain, to which he promised so frank a reply. Equally futile is his reference to Lord Derby's Despatch of May 6, 1877. For, about six weeks after that despatch was written, the Government, as is now notorious, received from Russia a full, clear, and precise statement of the objects contemplated in the prosecution of the war. These objects are substantially and almost precisely those provisionally secured to Russia by the preliminary treaty. If these objects justify us in going to war that was the time to signify this to Russia. And having failed to do so, our Government deliberately encouraged the Czar to suppose that there was nothing in his professed designs which our Government would regard as justifying their interference. The truth is that the paltry quibble upon which the destinies of this country, and, indeed, of human civilisation, are made to hang is judiciously concealed under a mist of words about the sacredness of treaties. Absolutely the only point of difference which has yet emerged between our own Government and that of Russia, is the refusal of the latter to accept the formula of “submission” to Europe which the former chooses to impose. And it cannot be too often or too emphatically reiterated that the best intelligence and the wisest statesmanship of this country, including, for instance, Lord Derby and Lord Carnarvon, indignantly repudiate the notion that such a difference is a sufficient ground even for war-like preparations. There is, at any rate, good ground for believing that what Russia objects to in this formula is its apparent imposition on

her of the attitude of a criminal at the bar of European judgment. With her refusal to accept such an attitude, all who can understand the existence of patriotic spirit and a sense of national honour, in any other country but their own, must necessarily sympathise. We are justified in this opinion by the position of the other Great Powers concerned. Whatever capital Mr. Cross may try to make out of the tone of foreign editors delighted at the prospect of England's embroilment, it remains an indisputable, a significant, a portentous fact that neither Germany nor France nor Austria nor Italy sees in the wordy difference between Lord Beaconsfield and Prince Gortschakoff the shadow of a pretext for refusing to enter the proposed Conference. Even supposing that there were more substance in the dispute than we allow, still the worst that could happen would be that war would follow the failure of negotiations in Conference, with more chance of allies, and certainly with a better justification in the eyes of the world than we have at present. Under such circumstances, to stand obstinately on a particular form of words, and to make the savage tribunal of war the first, instead of the ultimate, appeal, is a blunder and a crime certain to involve its advocates hereafter in shame and infamy. Some hope may, perhaps, be gathered from the growing firmness with which the better feeling of the country is reasserting itself. It seems almost incredible that even the daring of Lord Beaconsfield can face the responsibility of the threatened horror against the weighty opposition of a Conservative statesman like Lord Derby, backed by the protest of 80,000 such names as those advertised in the papers of last week. But it is necessary that the opposition should be both prompt, decided, and courageous in their further action, otherwise our doom is sealed.

THE REPEAL OF THE TEST AND CORPORATION ACTS.

The Liberation Society have made a timely and valuable contribution to the interesting event which will this day be commemorated by the presentation of an address to Earl Russell. They have issued a pamphlet of some seventy pages* from the practised hand of Mr. Skeats, who has condensed the essential facts associated with this political landmark in the history of England. His brochure is obviously the result of much careful research, and the material is put together with no little skill, and in a style worthy of the author of the “History of the Free Churches of England.” As we have before this endeavoured to show, the story of the imposition of these religious tests in the time of Charles II., the various attempts to modify them, and of their final repeal before the close of George IV.'s reign, forms, with the many collateral incidents, a highly interesting and instructive chapter in our ecclesiastical annals extending over a hundred and fifty years. Mr. Skeats describes in detail three successive efforts to get rid of this blot upon our Statute Book, the last of which succeeded in 1828. Probably the tests would have been retained till after the passing of the Reform Bill, four years later, but for the proportions which the agitation for Catholic Emancipation had now begun to assume, and which the Tories of that period hoped to postpone by some concessions to Protestant Dissenters. At all events, the latter deemed that the time was come to press their claims once more upon the attention of Parliament. In 1827 a special committee was formed, at a combined meeting of the Dissenting Deputies, the “Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty,” the Ministers of the Three Denominations, and the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. Mr. Skeats thus refers to the persons principally concerned in the movement:—

Mr. William Smith, M.P., who had taken an active part in the debates of the previous century, was nominated as chairman; and amongst the members were Mr. John Wilks, the leader of the Protestant Society, Mr. Benjamin Hanbury, Dr. Baldwin Brown, Mr. Thomas Ales Hankey, Mr. Serjeant Bompas, Mr. W. B. Gurney, the Revs. Dr. Aspland, Dr. Winter, Dr. F. A. Cox, Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Bowring, and Dr. Waugh. The general body of Dissenting ministers issued an address signed by the venerable Dr. John Rippon.

* *The Test and Corporation Acts: An Historical Memorial.* By HERBERT S. SKEATS, Author of the “History of the Free Churches of England,” &c. Price One Shilling. (London: The Liberation Society.)

Of great public bodies, the first to take action, as it had often done on similar occasions, was the Corporation of London, which, at a meeting specially convened, adopted an elaborate petition against the Acts.

During the Parliamentary session of that year Lord John Russell addressed the House of Commons on the subject in presenting some petitions, and on the 26th of February, 1828, his lordship, at the request of the committee above referred to, submitted a motion to the House of Commons for the repeal of the Tests and Corporation Acts. We quote the following description of the debate:—

In doing so, he referred to the history of the question, both in relation to the country and to Parliament; and at considerable length, but in terse and vigorous language, urged upon the House the rights of the Nonconformists. Mr. Smith referred especially to the gross injustice which had been done to Dissenters, no fewer than 200,000 of whom, he stated, had, at the call of the country, twenty-four years previous, enrolled themselves in arms for the national defence, every one of whom, of course, had made himself liable to the penalties of the law, and could only be absolved from them by an Indemnity Act. An able speech in support of the motion was made by Mr. Wilbraham, who was replied to on the Tory side by Sir Robert Inglis—a name not then so familiar to the House as it afterwards became. The honourable baronet argued that the Acts were necessary for the protection of the State. Mr. Huskisson, strangely enough, while regretting that such Acts existed, deprecated the motion as calculated to provoke irritation. Lord Althorp replied, and the debate was continued by Lord Nugent and Lord Milton. Mr. (after Sir Robert) Peel then addressed the House, in an elaborate speech, against the motion, denying the Dissenters' grievance, deprecating agitation, and stating that the existing law gave "merely a nominal predominance to the Established Church"—a predominance which he considered to be necessary. He was followed by Sir Thomas Acland and Mr. (afterwards Lord) Brougham—the latter, in one of the most vigorous and eloquent speeches in which he ever addressed the House. Lord Palmerston replied, stating that he could never vote for the removal of such imaginary grievances, while a real grievance was felt by the Roman Catholics. The House then divided, and the motion was carried by 237 to 193; majority 44.

Foot by foot, but not at great length, the subsequent stages of this measure were fought. On February 28, Lord John Russell moved that the House should go into committee, which he addressed in an elaborate speech, pointedly expressing the hope that those who were disposed to make any alteration in the Acts would "go the whole length of removing them entirely." The debate was brief, but is noticeable for another speech from Mr. Peel, in which he acknowledged that the majority on the previous motion was decisive, but, having done that, adopted the customary tactics of offering a compromise to the decisive majority—a compromise which was never hinted at while the issue was uncertain. Honourable members were besought not to pledge themselves to total abolition. He went on to hint at the desirableness of a "short delay." Lord John Russell met all such proposals with an unswerving firmness, and a good deal of irritation, or assumed irritation, arose. The moment was a critical one, and if the leader of the Liberal party had wavered, the proposed measure would inevitably have been lost. He had many temptations, for not a few of the old Whigs, whose sole political doctrine was compromise, suggested an arrangement. As it was, Lord John Russell's motion was carried without a division.

The first reading having passed, the second was moved on March 14th. The discussion was almost formal, only a few words dropping from Mr. Huskisson, Sir John Shelley, and Mr. Peel. In fact, the thought of any serious opposition was evidently abandoned. On March 18th, however, Mr. Sturges Bourne opened the discussion in committee, and suggested, in order to unite all parties, the insertion of a Declaration in the Bill. That declaration, as then proposed, was to the effect that every candidate for office should declare that he would not use any powers with which he might be invested by his office to subvert, or endeavour to subvert, the rights and privileges of the Church of England, Scotland, or Ireland, as by law established. Lord John Russell, in reply, said he considered the declaration to be totally unnecessary, and called upon the House "not to express distrust where there was no want of confidence," but ultimately left the question to the opinion of the House. Mr. Peel, on behalf of the Government, after reviewing all the courses which were open, both to the Government and to the House, suggested a similar declaration, expressing his earnest hope that it would not be rejected either by the noble lord (Lord John Russell), or "any person who is an advocate of the cause of the Dissenters," and avowed that, for himself, he should be satisfied with such a declaration, and that, if it were accepted, he had the "confident hope and expectation that the session would not expire without a satisfactory and permanent settlement of the question"; nay, more, so amiable had the Right Honourable Secretary become, now that it was obviously impossible to successfully resist the passing of the proposed Act, that he "hoped that only one feeling would pervade the House." More still! "I shall not," said Mr. Peel, who, not a month before, had resisted any legislation upon the

subject—"I shall not be satisfied unless the vote be unanimous." After some other speeches, Lord John Russell, in view, according to his judgment, of the general impression of the House, stated that he should acquiesce in the proposal of Mr. Peel. It is well, however, to quote his closing words:—

I cannot overlook, though it is a mere matter of form, that the bill which I propose to the House is "by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual as well as Temporal." I am, therefore, desirous that every point that can be conceded should be so, in order that those who might be otherwise compulsorily brought to agree in the measure, should be willingly induced to consent. I wish the measure not to be in any degree forced and compulsory—I am desirous that it should pass on free and willing grounds. I, therefore, have no hesitation in going into a committee, with instructions that the provision proposed by the Right Honourable Secretary of State should be referred to it. I wish that provision to be entertained rather than any other proposition. I shall, however, guard myself from adopting any of the specific words or phrases which the Right Honourable Secretary may have introduced. With respect to the declaration, I will say, that there unquestionably is something in the practice which is calculated to raise some doubt in the minds of the Dissenters; but I indulge in the hope of its being removed by conciliatory conferences, with respect to the form of words to be proposed, rather than by angry discussion and debate.

The bill then went through committee without a division. On recomittal on March 24, Lord John Russell made a brief statement respecting the position in which the proposed new clause placed the Dissenters. He said he had not committed himself to any form of words, but, he added, "The points to which I felt bound to look were, that the Dissenters should not be restrained from the expression of their religious opinions—that they should not be molested for retaining them—and that they should not be prevented from teaching and inculcating them to others." He thought, after consideration, that it would be a very essential means of pacifying the country, and that, also, it might satisfy the Church that it need apprehend no injury from the admission of Dissenters into civil offices. All the clauses were then agreed to without a division, and the bill passed without further opposition.

The "declaration" finally inserted in the bill was acquiesced in by the committee, with whom Lord John Russell was in co-operation, though only on the assurance that otherwise the measure would be thrown out. But the committee thought it incumbent on them to pass a formal resolution condemning the declaration as both "unnecessary" and "unreasonable" for reasons set forth.

In the House of Lords the first reading of the bill was moved by Lord Holland on April 1, and carried without opposition. On the second reading, on the 17th of the same month, his lordship made a speech of great power, and was followed by the Archbishop of York, who gave his support to the measure. So also did the Duke of Wellington, then Prime Minister. Though bitterly opposed by Lord Eldon, the bill was read a second time without a division. In committee, however, the conflict was renewed, and lasted several days. Several divisions were taken, chiefly by the old ex-Chancellor, whose opposition to the "revolutionary measure" was indefatigable and frantic but useless. But his lordship did not divide on the third reading, though the Duke of Cumberland spoke against the bill, which passed on the 28th of April. Protests were drawn up by sundry peers, and the 9th of May the bill for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts received the royal assent. It may be added that the Catholic Emancipation Act followed after a short interval, and that none were more cordial in supporting their co-religionists than the Protestant Dissenters, whom the Government of the day hoped to bribe into silence.

The author of the pamphlet before us gives some particulars of the commemorative banquet which took place in the Freemasons Tavern on the 18th of June, the date fixed for the jubilee dinner over which Earl Granville has promised to preside. We need not now further refer to this event, except to say that the Duke of Sussex took the chair on the occasion, and was supported by Lord Holland, Lord John Russell, Lord Althorp, Lord Howard, Lord Morpeth, Lord Carnarvon, Mr. Brougham, Sir Francis Burdett, Mr. Joseph Hume, and the leading members of the committee which had worked so well and successfully. It seems that the agitation against the Test Acts cost some 3,000l., the greater part of which was defrayed by the Committee of Deputies, who are now appropriately taking the initiative in commemorating the event.

Some of our younger readers may be curious to see the exact form of the declaration. It was as follows:—

I, A. B., do solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare, upon the true faith of a Christian, that I will never exercise any power, authority, or influence, which I may possess by virtue of the office of _____ to injure or weaken the Protestant Church as it is by law established in England, or to disturb the said church, or the bishops

and clergy of the said church, in the possession of any rights or privileges to which the said church, or the said bishops and clergy, are or may be by law entitled.

This declaration which timidity and bigotry foisted into the Act survived for a long time. As we stated last week, its eventual repeal was due to the energy and perseverance of Mr. George Hadfield, M.P. for Sheffield, who in 1859, and for six years afterwards, brought the matter before Parliament, and was constantly defeated by the House of Lords, or rather by the Episcopal Bench in that assembly. Their lordships did not give way till 1866, when by the passing of the Qualification for Offices Abolition Act the last relic of the Test and Corporation Acts vanished, after an interval of about two hundred years.

To his "historical memorial," Mr. Skeats has wisely added as appendices, copies of the Corporation Acts, the Test Act, the Tests and Corporation Acts Abolition Act, and the Qualification for Offices Abolition Act *in extenso*, supplemented by a short paper, briefly describing the principal measures in the direction of religious equality that have been passed since 1828. These additions give completeness to a pamphlet, which will, no doubt, be read with great interest during the next few weeks, and be preserved by many as a fitting memorial of one of the most striking episodes in the ecclesiastical history of this country.

We understand that the deputation to present the address of congratulation to Earl Russell are expected to reach Pembroke Lodge, Richmond, about five o'clock this afternoon. It will consist of members of the Committee of the Dissenting Deputies, headed by their chairman, Mr. Richard, M.P., representatives of the Congregational Union, the Baptist Union, and the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and some members of the Presbyterian body, as well as of other denominations. It is probable that his lordship will be present when members of the deputation are received by Lady Russell, although his feeble health will hardly permit him to take any active part in the proceedings. The more public celebration of this event will be on June 18, when a public dinner is to be given, under the presidency of Earl Fortescue.

RELIEF OF VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS.—At a conference of school managers held at the office of the National Society on Friday, which was presided over by the Archdeacon of Middlesex, in the unavoidable absence of the Bishop of London, the following resolutions were agreed upon:—1. That this conference desires to express its sense, not only of the great importance of maintaining the voluntary schools, but of the most urgent need of increased assistance towards their maintenance. 2. That a committee be appointed to draw up a statement on the whole subject of the voluntary schools, and to arrange for a deputation to Government to represent the case, and to pray for relief. This committee, it was agreed, should consist of Archdeacon Hessay, Canon Gregory, Rev. Joseph Bardsley, Hon. and Rev. Augustus Legge, Rev. C. A. Stephens, Mr. Richard Foster, Mr. Calvert, Q.C., Mr. J. G. Hubbard, M.P., Canon Money, and Rev. J. Duncan.

THE "RE-UNION OF CHRISTENDOM."—The following statement appears in the *Morning Post*:—An Oxford correspondent informs us that a very influential and important meeting of clergy and laity, which has been planned for some time, will be held in that University on Tuesday evening, May 14, under the presidency of the Bishop of Bombay, at Keble College. Attempts have been made (reported to be partially successful) to secure the co-operation of Roman Catholic prelates and priests, as well as of members of the Established Church, to take part in a preliminary conference prior to the public meeting. Among those who may be expected to appear on the platform as representatives of the A.P.U.C. are Mr. J. D. Chambers, of Oriel, Recorder of Salisbury (president); the Rev. H. N. Oxenham, of Balliol; Captain Fortescue (nephew of Archbishop Tait), and the Rev. F. H. Murray. Among others the Rev. William Humphrey, the celebrated Jesuit controversialist; Canons King, Patey, Butler, of Wantage; Bright, Liddon, and Ashurst; the Warden of Keble College, the Chancellor of Lincoln diocese, the Principal of Cuddesdon College, the Rev. E. S. Foulkes, who joined the Roman Church and then returned to the Church of England, are expected; and a considerable number both of the parochial and University clergy. Some members of the Greek Church will likewise take part in the meeting. The resolutions to be proposed stand as follows:—1. That the advance of the infidel movement throughout Europe, and the actual or threatened dissolution of the relations of Church and State, constitute a fresh call on sincere believers to pray and labour earnestly for the reunion of Christendom in "one faith and one fold." 2. That the accession of His Holiness Pope Leo XIII. and the reawakening life of Eastern Christianity afford at the present moment special grounds for renewed energy and hope. 3. That the ultimate aim and solution of the Oxford movement of 1833 must be sought in the restoration of the corporate unity of Christendom.

THE LIBERATION SOCIETY.

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL.

The usual meeting of the Council of the Liberation Society was held at the Cannon-street Hotel yesterday afternoon, under the presidency of Mr. H. R. Ellington, one of the treasurers of the society. Amongst those present were Mr. Henry Lee (Manchester), Hugh Mason (Ashton-under-Lyne), E. S. Robinson (Bristol), J. Carvell Williams, J. Dick Peddie (Edinburgh), G. Howell, H. W. Earp (Melbourne), W. Baines (Leicester), G. H. Baines (Leicester), the Rev. G. M. Murphy, T. Williams, J. P. (Merthyr), H. S. Leonard, H. S. Skeats, Rev. W. Griffith, E. Goddard (Ipswich), J. Gripper (Chelmsford), J. Fisher, J. Templeton, F. R. G. S., E. Butler (Leeds), the Rev. J. R. Thomson (Tunbridge Wells), the Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A., Hon. E. Lyolph Stanley, Mr. J. O. Nicholson (Macclesfield), Sir Peter Spokes (Reading), J. Andrew, J. F. Alexander, G. Dowman (Southampton), G. Howell, the Rev. J. Browne (Bradford), the Rev. W. F. Clarkson, G. Pearson (Glasgow), P. P. Perry (Northampton), E. Grimwade (Ipswich), P. Crellin, Neville Goodman, the Rev. B. Dale, Mr. T. Chatfield Clarke, Mr. M. J. Whibley (Cambridge), the Rev. J. M'Dougall (Darwen), Mr. Elias Thomas (Bradford), Mr. J. Y. Carryer (Stone), the Rev. T. Green (Ashton), Mr. F. Schnadhorst (Birmingham), Mr. R. Pullar (Perth), Mr. W. Sommerville (Bristol), Rev. T. E. Anthony (Plymouth), Messrs. A. H. R. Heriot (Kirkcaldy), F. W. Bourne, J. Hutchinson (Ashton), W. J. Cox (Dundee), the Rev. H. T. Robjohns, J. Marsden, B.A., J. Jull, G. Hastings, the Rev. J. M. Camp, the Rev. R. Macbeth, Mr. G. Kearley, &c.

The CHAIRMAN said that Mr. Alfred Illingworth would have presided on that occasion but that he was in Paris. Another friend, whom they all revered and loved—Mr. Edward Miall—(cheers)—was also unable to attend, which they much regretted, as if he had been present they would have been able to congratulate him upon having that day entered upon his seventieth year. He was quite sure that every member of that society would join in the expression of their congratulations, and in the expression of cordial wishes for the continuance of his life and strength. (Cheers.) His life had sufficiently shown his interest in their movement. His spirit was willing but his flesh was weak. The founders of the society, some forty years ago, exercised a wise discretion in arranging the annual meeting of the council, which afforded the committee an opportunity of meeting their supporters, and, as it were, taking stock of the past and stimulating one another for the work of the future. Several resolutions would be submitted to the council, and he would only remark on one or two points. Their honoured friend, who had so long acted as their secretary, had now entered upon a wider sphere—if that were possible—his official position had been altered, and instead of referring to him as had so often been done as their indefatigable secretary, he had become the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee, which enabled him to devote himself more fully to those larger questions which lay outside their movement. They had as much reason to be satisfied with their friend in his new position as they had in the past. In his place they had appointed Mr. Sydney Robjohns, who had for some time been discharging the duties of the office, and they had every reason to be satisfied with him. With regard to publications, he hoped every member would make himself acquainted with what had been issued, and would do all he could to promote their wider circulation. Some of them had been noticed by Mr. Arthur Arnold in the *Contemporary Review*, and, although he was mistaken on some points, yet that article might be taken as the criticism of an outsider—one who belonged to the outside political party which would have to deal with the question in the future. With regard to meetings held during the year, notwithstanding the serious interruption caused by the Eastern Question, their friends had not lost their interest in the question with which they had to deal. Mr. Illingworth thought that their orders must be to keep their flag for closer battle. Mr. Ellington proceeded to comment upon some of the most important features of the report, especially upon the extent of their lecturing arrangements during the year. Considering the absorption of the public mind that was a great thing. It seems there has been a disposition to meet them by a kind of rowdism. There were certain stages of public movements where people lose their temper and began to abuse. Their lecturers were sometimes charged with telling falsehoods about the Church, but their friends as a rule returned good for evil. He would call their attention to Mr. Martin's pamphlet, and especially to the chapter on the Ecclesiastical Commission, which required to be closely watched. They had circulated two and a half millions of various kinds of publications, and that had involved an amount of work and expense which was a tolerable indication of the activity which went on in Serjeants' Inn. He referred with regret and pain to

the decease of their esteemed and valued lecturer, Mr. Gordon, with the circumstances of whose death they were familiar. The committee had headed the subscription list which had been opened for his destitute family with the sum of 250*l*. They had not felt it necessary to make any appointment to fill his place at present. In reference to the Burials Bill, their friends on the other side had thoroughly given up the principle of the measure, and their efforts were now directed to see what form of compromise could be devised, but at present they were too much divided amongst themselves, and Mr. Balfour's Bill, now before the House of Commons, would probably come to nothing. To-morrow was the 50th anniversary of the passing of the Tests and Corporation Act, and a deputation from various bodies was to wait upon Earl Russell to present him with an address. After referring to the formation of the Scottish Council, the Chairman referred to the recent decision in the Hertford College case, which was in contravention of the whole spirit and tenour of the University Tests Act, and tended to perpetuate the exclusive pretensions of the Established Church. He thought the conduct of Lord Coleridge, when he had charge of the bill, was not very straightforward. An appeal to Parliament would probably be necessary. With regard to the general question of disestablishment, the declaration of Lord Hartington at Edinburgh indicated that the question was in the air, and would come into form by-and-by. Should Lord Hartington deal with the Scotch Church, it would hasten the disestablishment of the English Church. They desired to see a final settlement of the question—not a premature one, nor such a settlement as that of the Irish Church. It would be their steadfast aim to continue the educational process until they had convinced the people that what they asked for was not only just and right, but reasonable. Their business was neither hasting nor resting, but to sow the good seed, that in due time they might reap. (Cheers.)

Mr. SYDNEY ROBJOHNS, the minute secretary, then read the report, the first of another triennial period, which commenced by stating that the past year had been one of great anxiety to all concerned for the public interests; and occupied, as all minds have been, with the war raging in the East of Europe, and with the danger of war to which this country is now exposed, it has been less easy than in some previous years to secure attention for ecclesiastical or other domestic questions. The Executive Committee have, nevertheless, had abundant evidence of the continued growth of interest in the subject of disestablishment; of the hold which it is taking on the minds of politicians, of members of the Established Churches, and of the nation at large. There has, therefore, been no abatement of activity on the part of the society, though its direction has, to some extent, necessarily been altered. The official changes referred to at the triennial conference, and rendered necessary by the retirement of Mr. Carvell Williams from the secretariat have been carried out. Mr. Williams has been appointed chairman of the society's Parliamentary Committee, and deputy chairman of the Executive Committee. The other changes made include three appointments of three departmental secretaries, Messrs. Robjohns, Fisher, and Skeats; the first of whom has imported into the society fresh blood; while the other two are tried servants, full of experience and knowledge. Deep regret is expressed at the melancholy death, on his voyage to New York, of Mr. J. H. Gordon, one of the official representatives of the society, by which it has lost a zealous advocate, and the committee had, in a resolution they adopted, recorded their high appreciation of the ability, the courage, and the devotedness with which, as one of the society's lecturers, he advocated its principles and sought to advance its objects. In no previous year of the society's history—not even during that of the Irish Church agitation—has there been so large an issue of its publications. A new and cheaper edition of Mr. Frederick Martin's valuable pamphlet, on "The Property and Revenues of the Church of England," has recently been issued, and there has been a good demand for the "Practical Suggestions relative to the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of England," which suggestions have been keenly criticised. The committee have been gratified by the general acknowledgment that they serve the purpose of their framers in furnishing the basis for a thorough discussion of the principles upon which a measure of disestablishment for England should be constructed. The efforts to instruct and interest the agricultural labourers in the question of disestablishment, in anticipation of their being invested with the franchise at no distant day, have been continued, and there has been a wide distribution of tracts in Wales, translated into the vernacular, with satisfactory results. The total number of publications sent out from the office since the date of the last report has been 2,323,000. Such an extensive distribution of its literature has necessarily involved a considerable expenditure; but it is believed that the expenditure has been wisely incurred, and that a still further extension of its operations in this direction will presently become necessary. Notwithstanding the preoccupation of the national mind with foreign politics, the lectures and meetings of the society have been continued with energy and spirit, and have displayed some features of a novel character.

The spread of sacerdotalism has awakened national fear; and as disestablishment is brought more and more into the region of practical politics, leading

politicians, as well as ecclesiastics, have been compelled to deal with it in their public utterances. The admissions of Episcopalians—dissatisfied with the practical working of the Established system, and some of them ready to welcome disestablishment—have also been of great service in sustaining the interest of speeches and lectures delivered on the society's platform. During the year there have been as many as 930 lectures and meetings, in connection with which the services of upwards of 100 gentlemen have been called into requisition. Early in the season Mr. Dale and Mr. Rogers again placed their valuable services at the committee's disposal; and arrangements were made for their addressing several meetings; but it was subsequently thought desirable to postpone them till the excitement of the Eastern question had somewhat abated. Reference is also made to the growing disposition of the supporters of the Establishment to disturb the meetings of the society. To meet this state of things, the committee took steps to ascertain the exact state of the law relating to public meetings, and prepared instructions for the guidance of local agents and other persons responsible for the conduct of them. In the autumn of last year Mr. Fisher, the agency secretary, accompanied by Mr. Andrew, visited Ireland, to obtain information respecting the working of the Episcopal Church of Ireland since its disestablishment; as well as for the purpose of interesting the people of that country in the society's work in England. Much valuable material was collected, and the success which has attended the Irish Episcopal Church since it became a self-governing religious community, has afforded great encouragement to the society's friends in England and Scotland. Mr. Fisher has also visited Wales for the purpose of perfecting the society's organisation there; and it is hoped that, as a result of improved organisation and more sustained energy, the Nonconformists of the Principality will exert a powerful influence in future Parliamentary elections. Under the supervision of Mr. Kearley, acting as superintendent of the London agencies, special attention has been paid to the metropolis. A borough council has now been formed in nearly every Parliamentary borough.

These councils are designed to act in concert with the executive committee, and have been made sufficiently representative to embrace all sections of the friends of religious equality. As is well known, in the metropolis there is much difficulty in awakening interest in any public question; but it is hoped that the result of the appointment of the borough councils will be apparent at the next general election in greatly improving the Parliamentary representation. Additional work has also been done in London by means of lectures and discussions in connection with political clubs, young men's literary and other societies, working men's institutions and associations, and Nonconformist congregations, as well as by special courses of lectures. In all, about sixty meetings have been held in and about London; and there has also been a systematic distribution of literature in workshops and yards, with the assistance of voluntary agencies among the workmen themselves. Within the last two months over 120,000 publications have been thus circulated, in addition to a large number of placards which have been posted in the most important thoroughfares of the metropolis.

The report next refers to Scotland, where a council in connection with the society has been fully organised, and a secretary, Mr. James Tait, appointed, who devotes his whole time to the society's Scottish work. There is reason to believe that opinion in Scotland is rapidly growing in the direction of an early disestablishment of the Kirk.

Apart from the broad principle of religious equality, the Kirk is in a condition of peculiar weakness; since it exists chiefly on the sufferance of its opponents, and has but a feeble hold upon the sympathies of the country. Yet, as in England, so in Scotland, a vigorous ecclesiastical life has grown up around the Establishment, and the zeal and piety of the adherents of voluntarism is to be discerned in the liberality with which churches and manse have been reared, clergymen sustained, and the numerous religious institutions have been promoted and maintained. On the other hand, the Establishment, reduced in many districts by the fewness of its adherents to the point of absurdity, has never ceased to assert and to enforce extravagant claims of prescription and statute, nor to levy rates for the maintenance of its ministers and edifices.

A decided impetus was given to the agitation for disestablishment in Scotland by the visit of Lord Hartington to Edinburgh in November last. The subject is at present discussed in every Presbytery of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches, and will come prominently before the approaching General Assemblies. On May 21 it will also be discussed in the House of Commons, both Mr. Holms and Mr. Parker having proposed the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the operation of the Patronage Act of 1874, and Sir Alexander Gordon—a Conservative—the appointment of a royal commission to inquire into the causes which keep asunder Scottish Presbyterians, with a view to the removal of impediments to their reunion in a national Church. Reference is then made to the past work of the society, to the remarkable debates and divisions in the Lords last session, to the debate on Mr. Osborne Morgan's motion on Feb. 15 (which was rejected by a majority of only 15), and to the bills recently introduced by Conservative members (Mr. Ritchie and Mr. Balfour), which equally indicate a consciousness of the necessity for concession. But the question will probably be left to the decision of a general election, and the committee anticipate the result with confidence. After a brief sketch of the attempts to liberalise in both Houses, though unsuccessfully, the Government bill appointing commissioners, armed with extensive powers, for effecting further reforms in the

Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, the report refers to last week's decision in the Hertford College case, which appears, to a considerable extent, to endanger the rights secured by the University Tests Abolition Act of 1871.

In the case of the Queen v. The Principal and Fellows of Hertford College, Oxford, the Court of Appeal, in reversing a previous judgment of two of the Queen's Bench judges, has expressed the opinion that the operation of the University Tests Act in regard to college fellowships is wholly retrospective; that not only may new colleges with denominational trusts be founded, but that new fellowships and offices, with ecclesiastical tests attached, may be created in colleges existing at the time the Act was passed. The court has also expressed the further opinion that, even in the case of the old fellowships, if college authorities choose to ignore the University Tests Act, by ignoring the claims of qualified Nonconformists to fellowships, the courts of law cannot interfere, the requirement of the Act being a moral obligation, which cannot be enforced as a legal duty.

On the legal merits of this decision the committee will not venture to offer an opinion, but they may point out the practical consequences involved in the *dicta* of the court in pronouncing it. One is, that the Test Act of 1871 (the declared object of which was to render the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge "freely accessible to the nation") is, as regards the colleges, of value in relation to past endowments only; another, that not only may new denominational colleges be created, to outweigh the influence of the undenominational colleges in the government of the University; but that even the undenominational colleges may gradually be redenominationalised, by the creation of new fellowships and offices. It follows, that while the Legislature was supposed, in 1871, to have adopted the definite principle that the national Universities should henceforth be free from sectarianism, it has, according to these judicial opinions, done its work so imperfectly, that new legislation will become necessary to accomplish fully the object aimed at by the Act.

A hope is expressed that before long the ecclesiastical grants in Ceylon and India will be abolished. A motion by Mr. W. McArthur relative to the former colony was last session rejected by a majority of only 26, and these ecclesiastical subsidies create much irritation in the island. The question of the sale of livings in the Church of England was brought before the House of Commons last session and this by Mr. Leatham, and the Government has since, at the instance of the Archbishop of York, consented to the issue of a royal commission to inquire into the subject, and to suggest remedies for admitted evils; but the discussions in both Houses have indicated how little in the way of radical change may be expected to result from the labours of the commissioners. Reference is also made to the bill before Parliament for the erection of the sees of Liverpool, Newcastle, Wakefield, and Southwell. Recent events in the Established Church are then sketched with graphic force—such as the decision in the Riddale case and its consequences; the admonitions given to Mr. Mackonochie, who may possibly, like Mr. Tooth, suffer legal penalties, or like him may escape through legal technicalities; the suspension of the Rev. A. H. Ward, of St. Raphael's, Bristol; the suspension of Mr. Edwards, of Prestbury; the proceedings of the Church Congress at Croydon; the formation of a Church league to promote spiritual freedom in the Church of England; and the setting on foot of kindred organisations, such as the Working Man's Church of England Association. The report goes on to say:—

It is important that attention should be fixed on facts like these at a moment when the absorption of the public mind on a more pressing topic may lead some to suppose that the course of disestablishment is in danger of being seriously checked. Foreign affairs are not likely long to push aside domestic questions of such pressing urgency as those involved in the existing relations between the State and Churches of England and Scotland; and as soon as public thought and feeling return to their ordinary channels, it may be expected that ecclesiastical matters will irresistibly force themselves on the notice of politicians. Not less, but more and more, will the demand for disestablishment be heard in electoral contests, and shape the action of Liberal statesmen. Those who make the demand now form a party too large and too resolute to be ignored in the construction of new political programmes. They can be patient still, as they have been patient in the past. They can be prudent and considerate also; but the time will come—and it may arrive sooner than has commonly been anticipated—when it will be impossible longer to delay that final struggle to prepare for which the society has so long and so persistently laboured.

Exactly half a century has passed since Nonconformists, under the leadership of Lord John Russell, succeeded in obtaining the repeal of the iniquitous Corporation and Tests Acts passed in the reign of Charles II.—iniquitous, because they not only disqualified Nonconformists for holding public office and employment, but did so by prostituting one of the most sacred of religious rites. The Acts were defended as corner-stones of the Constitution, and as essential to the existence of the Established Church; but were at length swept out of existence, as relics of the intolerance and persecution of a past age. Other relics—equally cherished by the supporters of Establishments—have since disappeared; Roman Catholics having been emancipated; Jews admitted to Parliament; the laws relating to births, marriages, and deaths amended; compulsory Church-rates abolished; and the national Universities thrown open to all, without sectarian distinctions. Each of these changes has, to a greater or less extent, recognised the principle of religious equality. Each has been followed by beneficial results, adding to the peace and happiness of the people, and doing nothing in any degree injurious to their religious or to their political interests. There now remains only to uproot that in which the degrading disabilities, now happily removed, had their origin, and to maintain which they were so pertinaciously maintained. In

striving to put an end to the remaining national Church Establishments, we are but pressing to their ultimate and logical issues the principles which, from the passing of the Toleration Act, the Legislature has, by successive measures, slowly and fitfully sanctioned. We shall triumph in the future as our fathers, and we ourselves, have triumphed in the past; and while we patiently labour, and vigilantly watch, we shall be inspired with the energy which springs from the confidence that our aims are neither narrow nor selfish, but in the highest degree just and patriotic.

Mr. H. R. ELLINGTON, the treasurer, then presented the financial statement, which showed that the receipts for the year (including a balance of 1,241*l.* 12*s.* 9*d.* at the commencement) were 16,353*l.* 1*s.* 4*d.*—the expenditure 15,612*l.* 11*s.* 5*d.*, and the balance in hand 740*l.* 9*s.* 11*d.*

Mr. HENRY LEE, of Manchester, moved the first resolution:—

That the Council has special pleasure in receiving and adopting the report of the executive committee and the treasurers' account; inasmuch as, notwithstanding the excitement occasioned by war, or the apprehension of war, the meetings held by the Society have been numerous and well attended; the circulation of its publications has been unprecedentedly large, and the interest of the public in the question of disestablishment has in no degree abated.

He congratulated the new secretary upon the report just read. The changes which had been thought necessary in the official arrangements of the society had not, he believed, rendered it less efficient. Their reports in past years had always been of great interest because they had been drawn by a hand which had been able to give to them a spirit and a force which few secretaries could have done. The report represented a large amount of work done during the past year. Great progress had been made, and they had great reason to thank God and take courage. The suggestions relative to disestablishment and disendowment issued by the committee were very valuable and had put the enemy in the wrong. They could not be charged with robbing the Church, for they there dealt with it in a liberal spirit. After reference to the great advance of the disestablishment question in Scotland, he said that the demand for the Society's publications came from the right quarters, and when the agricultural labourers had the voting power they would understand that question. The fact that the Liberal leaders were beginning to see that the question could not be set aside, and that they advocated it in Scotland indicated that before long they would be obliged to take the same course in respect to England. When statesmen like Mr. Forster acknowledged that clergymen were servants of the State, which was what they had always contended for, those clergymen who looked upon it as a spiritual institution only would consider whether it was worth their while to remain in that Church. He had great pleasure in moving the adoption of the report, and hoped that the time would soon come when they would be able to celebrate a great victory. (Cheers.)

The Rev. GEO. REANEY seconded the resolution. He had been impressed with the readiness of the agricultural labourers of Berkshire for disestablishment. One of them who had been parish clerk but who had left the Established Church, said to him, "I found out that my soul was of far greater value than 23*s.* a week." He thought the attention of the council should be directed to the grammar schools and to the schemes for their reconstruction, and referred particularly to the Reading School. They hoped to return as their new representative for that borough Mr. Palmer, who was quite sound on their question, as well as on the larger questions of public interest.

Mr. HUGH MASON, of Ashton-under-Lyne, said he had a very decided conviction that however bad the times were commercially, the better was their opportunity of working out those questions in which they were interested. He would not for a moment set them aside for the Eastern Question, but would take advantage of the enthusiasm created thereby amongst the working people to follow it up by lectures on Disestablishment by able men. Nothing had disgusted him so much as the attitude of the clergy of the Church of England at such a crisis as the present; and while he did not know any class of men so bound together to uphold the wretched Government which cursed the country, until they got rid of that rich powerful corporation, they would have very little chance of promoting peace and goodwill in all countries, and for the carrying out of great reforms. In his humble judgment the committee had made a great mistake in withdrawing Messrs. Dale and Rogers from the agitation of the question of disestablishment. The Nonconformists of the country were very numerous, active, and intelligent, and if they only combined in their determined strength, they could make very short work of the questions which were now pressing for settlement. He was quite willing to accept those little trifling measures such as the Burials Bill, but, after all, it was very slow progress. They all wished to see disestablishment before they were called away. He had very little faith in Lord Hartington as a leader, and on that question he was not the man to lead the Nonconformists of the country. They wanted a man with more backbone. He should be delighted to see the town of Bradford make a determined effort to turn out Mr. Forster, who was one of those weak-kneed, temporising politicians that did them no good at all. As Nonconformists their thoughts had been carried back fifty years, and to the reforms which had been carried out by them, though hindered by the Church party and the Whig

party. They should now, he thought, adopt a bolder policy, and take advantage of the enthusiasm which was being evoked. In Lancashire and Yorkshire they were in a state of collapse. He believed the best time to promote great reforms was when the people were pinched. (Hear, hear.) It was in a time of poverty that the corn laws were passed. Let them take advantage of their opportunities, and press on their great question boldly. (Cheers.)

Sir PETER SPOKES referred to the Reading Grammar School, and to the advance which their principles had made in that town.

THE HERTFORD COLLEGE CASE.

The Hon. LYULPH STANLEY moved the following resolution:—

The Council is concerned to find that, in delivering judgment in the case of Hertford College, the Court of Appeal has expressed the opinion that, notwithstanding the provisions of the University Tests Abolition Act of 1871, college authorities cannot be compelled by law to elect Nonconformists fellows of colleges, however qualified they may be for the office; and also, that new denominational endowments and offices may be created in existing as well as in new colleges. That, as these judicial opinions are calculated to seriously interfere with the successful working of the Tests Abolition Act, and are contrary to the spirit and intention of the Act, the Council requests the Executive Committee to consider what steps should be taken to prevent such a result.

He said that some of them were prepared for the decision of the Court of Appeal, but very few lawyers were prepared for the judgment which had been given. He would not criticise that judgment, but they owed a debt of gratitude to Mr. Tillyard for having come forward on public grounds to raise that question, and the imputation on his motive in the decision read by Lord Coleridge was, he thought, not becoming the bench of justice. Although the subsequent remarks of Lord Coleridge were not law, yet they were most weighty and grave, and fraught with serious consequences to them, and might be taken as a justification to accept endowments and offices limited to one particular denomination. In the face of that judgment they were told that if colleges choose to take such endowments they might do so, and that the law offers no remedy. It was said they might go to the visitor, but he was a domestic judge and not for outsiders. They were in the position of having a wrong without a remedy, and the power was given to re-create not only other endowments but other colleges. Faggot votes could be multiplied by means of officers with infinitesimal salaries, who could reintroduce sectaries by which Nonconformists would be banished from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. (Hear, hear.) They had thought that in respect to the Universities they might almost have sheathed their swords, and that with the exception of a few clerical fellowships they had practically put an end to the state of things that had formerly existed. But it seemed that they must now have fresh legislation, with penal powers attached. He did not think that the Liberation Society and the party of progress would be afraid to take up that question and carry it again to Parliament. (Cheers.)

Mr. NEVILLE GOODMAN said he felt a special interest in the Hertford College case as Mr. Tillyard was a neighbour of his, and it was at his suggestion that Mr. Tillyard presented himself for examination. He was a man who would do honour to any classical appointment. He confessed that with all their good intentions they had landed themselves in a worse position than if they had not taken any action at all. But as they were law-abiding they wished to know what the law was. That decision showed them the necessity of future legislation, seeing that Lord Coleridge had gone out of his way to overthrow the University Tests Act. Leaving the case as it was new fellowships could be created, and that was not placing them in a fair position. It needed the bigotry of those who were connected with a dominant sect to create an exclusive fellowship. It was perfectly certain that no Baptist or Independent would be able to create a fellowship in their own favour only. It seemed to him very desirable that they should give their earnest attention to the whole question, for the recent decision showed that their work as regards university reform had only been half done. (Cheers.)

The Rev. THOMAS GREEN (Ashton-under-Lyne) said he thought they ought to express their profound dissatisfaction with the present state of that matter. They had been fairly sold, and he should like to know if they had not the right to carry an appeal to the House of Lords. He thought the resolution was scarcely adequate to express their views.

Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS thought it a little unreasonable to expect the committee to be prepared with a plan of opposition. Their official statements had always been characterised by great moderation, and he submitted that the resolution was strong enough for present requirements.

The Rev. J. G. ROGERS doubted the expediency of going again into a court of law, for there would not be much chance of a reversal of the decision. The judgment was correct on technical grounds, but the spirit of the Act had been violated. It would be better to raise the question in Parliament. If the members of any sectarian body chose to endow a college they had no objection to allege, but if the college was to be a part of a great national university and those who represented it were to take part in the Government of the institution, it was quite clear that through that path of private endowments, the way might be prepared for the revival of sectarian influences in the national universities.

Against that process they should strongly protest. (Cheers.)

THE SECRETARIAT.

Mr. E. S. ROBINSON (Bristol) moved :—

The Council expresses entire satisfaction with the official appointments and changes made by the Executive Committee, as the result of Mr. Carvell Williams's resignation of the office of Secretary of the Society. It also shares in the feeling of deep regret expressed by the committee at the death of the Society's able and devoted lecturer, Mr. Gordon; as well as in their sympathy with his family in their present affliction.

He said he entirely concurred in the resolution, and in the changes which had relieved Mr. Williams of subordinate duties and set him free to devote his energies and faculties in the way he thought best. Seeing how the society had grown, those changes had become necessary. He adverted to the fact that the income in 1848 was only 1,600*l.*, and that it was now 16,000*l.* (Hear, hear.)

Mr. GEORGE BAINES (Leicester) seconded the resolution, which was adopted.

SCOTCH DISESTABLISHMENT.

Mr. PEDDIE (Edinburgh), in a short speech, moved the next resolution as follows :—

The Council highly approves of the steps taken by the Executive Committee to promote a well-organised movement in Scotland for the early abolition of the Establishment in that country, and earnestly hopes that the Scottish Council will be enabled so to carry on its work as to secure the co-operation of all classes. The Council finds, in the recent action of Scottish ecclesiastical bodies, as well as in recent Parliamentary elections, gratifying proof of the progress of Disestablishment principles, and, in prospect of an early Parliamentary discussion on Scottish ecclesiastical affairs, it trusts that the friends of religious equality in this country and in Scotland will unite in support of a broad national policy.

Mr. ALD. BANTOCK (Wolverhampton) seconded the resolution, which was adopted.

THE BURIALS QUESTION.

Mr. E. GRIMWADE (Ipswich) moved, and Mr. CHARLES JAMES, Merthyr, seconded the next resolution, which was also adopted :—

The Council warmly congratulates the opponents of the existing burial law on the decisive advance made during the past year towards the accomplishment of the object for which they have so long laboured. The defeat of the recent Government measure; the adoption by the House of Lords of the clause of Lord Harrowby, and the small majority by which Mr. Osborne Morgan's resolution has been rejected by the House of Commons, are regarded by the Council as proofs that England will not long continue to be nearly the only civilised country in which the rights of conscience are violated in the interment of the dead. While the Council regards the bills lately brought in by Mr. Ritchie and Mr. Balfour as evidence of a growing desire on the part of many Episcopalians to effect a satisfactory settlement of the question, it is of opinion that they are altogether inadequate for that purpose.

THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION.

Mr. F. SCHNADHORST (Birmingham) moved the following resolution :—

In view of the possibility of an early general election, the Council urges upon the Society's friends the necessity for such well-considered and resolute action, in all the constituencies, as will enable them so to exert their electoral influence as to secure a representation of their principles in Parliament corresponding with the growth of public opinion in favour of those principles which has been witnessed since the last appeal to the electoral body.

With this resolution, he said, we shall all agree, as it is almost impossible for us to commence action in the spirit of this resolution too soon. The electoral agents of the Tory party have lately been advising an appeal to the country, but during the last few weeks I think they have changed their opinion, and I should not regret it if the Government now see their way to an appeal to the country, as I think a very decided change of opinion has taken place in the country, although not in Birmingham. We know not what it is to speak of a war party in our district. I think the war feeling has very largely subsided in the country. We are anxious when a dissolution does take place that the constituencies should send back a large majority of those who are favourable to this society. We are too apt to leave things too much to chance. There are a large number of places where the candidates are not yet chosen: the candidates must be selected, and our influence should be exercised when that is done. We may secure men who are right on the great question of religious equality. (Cheers.)

Mr. THOMAS (Bradford) emphasised the previous speaker's last remark. It was of tenfold importance that they should be careful in the selection of candidates, and they were in that happy condition that they could not lose by the assertion of their principles at this time. Their leaders, if they led at all, only led them into the Tory ranks. As he happened to come from Bradford he might be excused for saying, with respect to Mr. Forster's re-election, that so long as he maintained the position which he at present held he had not the ghost of a chance of securing the support of the Liberal party in that borough.

Mr. GRIMWADE said that for twenty-five years they were in a similar position at Ipswich until, on the retirement of Mr. Adair, they insisted at the next selection of candidates they must choose one, and with the consequence that the party was no longer divided.

The resolution having been supported by Mr. JOHNSTONE (Aylesbury), in a brief speech, was carried unanimously.

The Rev. WM. GRIFFITH (Derby) moved, and Mr.

E. GRIPPER (Nottingham) seconded a vote of thanks to the Chairman, which having been briefly acknowledged, the proceedings closed.

THE PUBLIC MEETING AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE.

The annual public meeting in connection with the Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control was held last evening in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Mr. Henry Lee, of Manchester, in the chair. There was as usual a crowded attendance, some 5,000 persons being present, and the chairman was supported by the leading friends of the society, many of whose names are given above.

Mr. ROBJOHN said he was sorry to announce that Sir Wilfrid Lawson was prevented by illness from being present. A letter had been received from Sir Wilfrid expressing his great regret, but saying it was impossible for him to be present. In the emergency Mr. Henry Lee, of Manchester, had kindly consented to take the chair. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN had to crave the indulgence of the meeting in having consented to take the chair on very short notice. He greatly regretted that Sir Wilfrid Lawson was not able to be present. He had come, in common with most of them, in order to enjoy what he believed would have been a very genial speech—(applause)—and which would have been a speech upon the subject which they were met together to promote, which would not only have instructed them, but have sent them away more determined than ever to try to carry out the great object they had in view. (Applause.)

Their question was one which was perhaps slowly, but thoroughly, advancing; they met every year in larger numbers, with more enthusiasm, and also a stronger opposition. (Laughter.) And it was this stronger opposition which, in their judgment, went to prove that their existence was progressing. (Loud applause.) This was the thirty-third or thirty-fourth anniversary of the Liberation Society.

He believed that thirty years ago the income of the society was 1,600*l.* a-year, while the present income of the society had now reached 16,000*l.* (Applause.) Were they to test by a money standard the interest taken in this question, that, he believed, was an answer to the statements made by some that the Liberation Society was declining, and that it must sooner or later cease to exist. (Great applause.) They, however, intended to go on steadily with their work, diffusing opinions amongst rich and poor, the learned and the unlearned, and they knew that the opinions they had held so long were being shared more and more by the great mass of their countrymen. The report which Mr. Carvell Williams would give them would tell them of the progress made during the year, and would reveal a great deal of the work the Liberation Society had done. It had been said, on very high authority, that the Liberation Society would never disestablish the English Church—that if disestablishment took place it would be from within—but all he could say was that whether disestablishment came from within or without, they should be quite content. (Great applause.) Their object would be gained if religion were separated from State patronage and control, but they would claim to have had something to do with the change of opinion within the Church. They had no doubt whatever that that change was going on, that men were beginning to see that religion was not a thing to be taught by the State, but that which must be separated from all State associations, and be taught by those who were themselves religious, and who devoted their lives to this purpose. It was impossible to make a man religious by Act of Parliament; an Act of Parliament could not formulate for him a creed; other influences must be brought to bear upon a man before he could become what they wished all should be. Their ultimate victory was sure. They saw signs that this victory would be achieved at no very distant period; it might be that those who were in the evening of life would not see it, but many of the younger men present would live to see the triumph of their principles. (Great applause.) The question of disestablishment was no longer in the background. It was in the forefront, and at the next election of Parliament, or the next but one, this question would have to be considered by those who sought the suffrages of the people. It might be that at the next election this Eastern Question would interfere, but they were not afraid of the Eastern Question. (Hear, hear.) The found that, notwithstanding the great excitement which the prospect or otherwise of war had exercised over the country, people were interested in this question as much as the other, and that their meetings throughout the country had not suffered in consequence of the greater prominence given to the great question in the East. The outlook, therefore, was not one over which they need mourn. They regarded this question as important in its effect on the national life, in the social order and good fellowship amongst the people; and in regard to the spiritual condition of the great masses of the people, they believed that the settlement of this question would be a revolution peaceable in its character, equal, if not superior, to any change that had ever taken place in this land,

because it would be the starting point for new feelings, new ideas, new works, and new achievements. Before calling upon the first speaker to address the meeting, he might mention that a note had been received, addressed to Sir Wilfrid Lawson as the chairman, by one whom they all loved and honoured, Charles Spurgeon. (Cheers.) The note ran as follows :—

Nightingale-lane, May 7, 1878.

DEAR SIR WILFRID,—

Having to preach this afternoon, I feel I cannot stand a second meeting to-day, so please excuse my absence. My heart is as thoroughly in the good work as ever. (Hear, hear.) The evils of State control in religion strike me every day more forcibly; and the blessings that would come of disestablishment are more and more apparent. I am glad that the cause has your warm support. (Cheers.)

Mr. J. CARVELL WILLIAMS moved the first resolution as follows :—

This meeting regards with much satisfaction the extent of the Society's operations during the past year. It rejoices at the growth of opinion in Scotland in favour of the abolition of the Establishment of that country; and, looking to the character of recent events in the Church of England, it believes that they will help to prepare the minds of its members for the emancipation of their Church from the restraints necessarily imposed upon it by an Establishment.

He said he should only speak to one of the subjects of the resolution—viz., the operations of the Society for the past year. In reference to the official rearrangements after the Triennial Conference in order to enter on a new campaign, he said the changes made for the purpose had been highly successful. Having paid a tribute to the late Mr. Gordon, the lecturer, Mr. Williams said that anxiety had been caused during the year lest the country should be rushing into a needless war. (Cheers.) He knew that the friends of the Society were for peace—(loud cheers)—and if there were any doubt about it he need only call Mr. Gladstone as a witness. (Renewed cheers, the audience rising and waving hats and handkerchiefs.) This anxiety, however, had not deterred the Society from going on with its own work. Mr. Williams then stated some of their plans of action. One was the formation of councils in each of the electoral districts in the metropolis. Some of the meetings of the Society had been exciting of late. If Her Majesty's Government had their "Jingoes," it was not surprising that the Establishment should also have its "Jingoes." ("Hear, hear," and loud laughter.) The distribution of the society's literature among the agricultural districts had caused many of the agricultural labourers to become converts, and also distributors of the society's tracts. Having referred to the many steps taken towards Scotch disestablishment, Mr. Williams, alluding to the "Suggestions" which had been sent out, said a bishop had lately called these "Suggestions" "a wicked scheme," but that was only an Episcopal way of speaking of things bishops did not like. (Cheers.) The Burials question was next noticed by Mr. Williams, and its progress in Parliament described. He observed that if they were allowed to alter in some respects the two bills on this question recently introduced by private members, they might be made acceptable to Nonconformists; and he ridiculed the petitions which had been signed by, or under the auspices of, the clergy of the Established Church. He congratulated Nonconformists on the defeat, the previous night in the House of Commons, of the Bermondsey Vestry Bill, which was an attempt to infringe the Compulsory Church Rate Abolition Act. In conclusion, the speaker anticipated, in case a permanent peace were soon established (which God grant), a reaction of the public mind with regard to public questions, and in favour of the principles advocated by this society. They must, however, wait, or make such progress as Heaven would allow, but labouring while they waited, and in Heaven's own time they would be rewarded for their labours. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. J. DICK PEDDIE, of Edinburgh, chairman of the Scottish Society's Council, said that Mr. Carvell Williams had referred to Scotland being rather backward in this question, but he thought that was quite a mistake. He knew that Scotchmen were often accused of taking the merit of all discoveries, but he could assure them in perfect sincerity that the disestablishment controversy began in Scotland. (Hear, hear.) It began in 1829; and in 1832 organisations were formed, and by 1833 it had taken such an effect that it ended in the Disruption; and that was ten years before the Liberation Society was founded. (Cheers.) If they had not done much since, it was simply because the state of ecclesiastical matters in Scotland consequent on the Disruption had made it utterly impossible to carry on such a question. They had now, however, entered upon it in earnest. They began two or three years ago, and formed organisations. The visit of Lord Hartington was an important event. It was supposed by some of the local disestablishers that he came down for the purpose of inducing them to become quiet. He spoke a few neat and statesmanlike sentences, and by some it was supposed he meant to indicate that the Liberal leaders were ready to take up the question, whilst others said that his words showed that the Established Church of Scotland was safe for a generation at least. (Laughter.) Whatever might have been his intentions, there could be no doubt of the effect of them; they were stimulated to fresh efforts and began thoroughly to organise. Committees had been formed in all the chief centres of population, and he trusted the next election would show

the effect of their organisation. They began a series of public meetings, but their success did not correspond to their expectations and desires. It had pleased Providence to place at the head of affairs a mysterious gentleman—(applause)—who had managed to keep the country in a state of excitement on the Eastern Question, so that for a time no other subject had had a chance of getting the public attention, and great as their question was, he felt it must occupy a second place beside that question, not of peace or war, but whether the country was to be betrayed into, or saved from, a great national crime. (Applause.) The speaker then referred to the relative position of the different religious bodies in Scotland, and concluded by saying that they had but to go on with energy to achieve a success in the repeal of ecclesiastical privilege, and to blot out from the Statute Book the last vestige of intolerance. (Cheers.)

The Rev. SAMUEL PEARSON, M.A., of Liverpool, said it was a great thing to attend an orderly meeting on this question. They had in Liverpool educated men in every parish, but unfortunately one educated gentleman was not able to teach all his followers. The arguments with which they were met were flour-bags, eggs, more or less rotten, and how worthy of the beasts at Ephesus. (Laughter.) But still they held the fort. (Applause.) It was a dangerous outpost, but they believed that even in Liverpool the cause of disestablishment was progressing very fast. (Cheers.) One thing would help them, and that was the fact that they were about to have a new bishop. (Laughter.) It might not be known to them that a bishop cost more than an apostle, at least to the Corinthian Church; but they in Liverpool were now passing the hat round in order to obtain 80,000*l.* for their bishop, and the only difficulty they would have was that they were not quite sure whether, when the bishop came out of the ecclesiastical eggshell, he would be a Protestant or a Ritualist. (Laughter and applause.) They were sometimes told that the great advantage of an Establishment was that politics got moulded with religion, and casting a backward glance for twelve months, assuming that peace was a part of religion, he would ask them what the Establishment had done for peace? (Loud applause.) Then, again, no efforts seemed able to keep the Church in order. Mr. Leckie gave a description of the disorderly character of the clergy in the last century, and said they were just the same at the present time. The ecclesiastical law of England was in a state of confusion, and was worked with an animus against the Ritualists, and as for Lord Penzance, he sometimes pitied the learned judge, who must, at times, long for the sweet repose of the Divorce Court. (Laughter.) The present state of the ecclesiastical courts was a scandal to religion. (Cheers.) It was an example which their pastors, teachers, and lords spiritual ought not to give them, and they said it was time that this disorderly rowdiness should cease by disestablishment. (Applause.) Mr. Forster had agonised with the question at Bradford, and told them in that remarkable speech of his that the great blessing of an Establishment was, that if anybody was at the point of death he had a right to call in a minister of the State Church. He, however, said that they had a right to call in any Christian minister, and for his own part he would rather call in one of the deacons of this Tabernacle than he would many parish priests. The Church was said to have existed for eighteen centuries, yet she had not yet defined what principles she would teach, and, therefore, they must respectfully ask the State to get out of the road so that religious people might define their own religion. (Applause.) There was only one force that would make religion triumph in this world—that force which once turned the world upside down, which had reclaimed this our land from barbarism, which had evangelised Nonconformity, which was now shaking to their centres the ancient systems of India and China—the force of unconstrained Christian love; and that force they desired that the Episcopal Church should have in all its fulness. (Loud applause.)

The Rev. R. M. WOODS (Salop), who was announced as a clergyman of the Church of England, said, in supporting the resolution, he appeared before the assembly as a friend of the Church of England, and while he claimed for that Church all the credit that was due to her, and while he viewed with satisfaction the renewed efforts she had been making during later years, he could not shut his eyes to the fact that her connection with the State had sadly impaired her spirituality, and interfered with her usefulness. (Cheers.) All the dignity and prestige and emoluments the Church had gained by its connection with the State was not to be compared to the position she had lost. It was a painful thing to say, but it must be said, that the Church Establishment was the most corrupt, he might almost say the only corrupt, institution in the country. The sale of livings, as practised in the Church and fostered by the State, was a stumbling-block to the clergy, a serious hindrance to the usefulness of the Church, and a scandal to Christianity. (Cheers.) That he might not be led away by his own indignant feelings on this matter he would read a few short extracts from a leading article in the *Times*—a paper distinguished by its moderation as well as its ability. The rev. gentleman quoted an article from the leading journal, showing that there were 200 livings in the Church, bought and sold in the same manner as the Three Per Cent. Annuities, and pointing out some of the evils of the system. And he then went on to say

that when they heard of civil and military appointments being sold in Turkey they were not surprised, because they looked upon it as the natural consequence of a corrupt system of government. But how could they expect that the Church of Christ would flourish under a system of venality, carried on, not secretly as among the Turks, but openly in the face of the world? How absurd was it to talk of the revenues as being appropriated to the Church when they were sold as annuities to fill the pockets of unscrupulous patrons? It would seem indeed, from the language of some of the defenders of the Establishment, as if they looked on the rights of patrons and the income of the clergy as the chief interests of the Church, the extension of true religion being merely a secondary consideration. It mattered not what scandal might be brought upon the Church, or how the spiritual interests of the parishioners might be secured, provided the rights of the patrons were maintained. (Hear, hear.) As an instance let him remind them what occurred in the House of Lords on the Bishop of Peterborough's bill in 1874. The Bishop of Exeter modestly proposed that, in order to avoid scandal, the sale of advowsons and next presentations by public auction should be prohibited, and that such transactions should be restricted to a contract, but the Lord Chancellor did not think it would be right to dictate to the patron where or how he should sell his property. His property! What a term to apply to one of the most sacred trusts with which a man could be invested. (Applause.) But such was the demoralising effect of a State Establishment. (Hear, hear.) The natural tendency and the actual result of her corrupt system was to foster in the Church a worldly and mercenary spirit, and many young men trusted to their money or to their family interest for their entry into the Church, as it was called, entering the ministry with a view to emoluments, social position, and a life of ease, without perhaps any higher motive. As a proof of this statement he had only to refer to the numerous advertisements which appeared in the ecclesiastical papers of "livings wanted to purchase." In these advertisements they almost invariably found that a large income, good society, comfortable surroundings, and little duty—(laughter)—were the things required, a "large sphere of usefulness" being regarded as a serious drawback to the market value of a living. (Laughter and cheers.) Was not the universal use of the word "living" a sad reproach upon the Church? Archbishop Trench had remarked that we might learn much about the character and habits and thought of a people of any age or country from the words and phrases current among them, and he (Mr. Woods) sadly feared that the use of the word "living" in the Church of England as signifying a pastoral charge would give to posterity a poor opinion of the present age. (Hear, hear.) He was bound to state, however, that there were thousands of spiritually-minded and exemplary men in the Church of England—(cheers)—and it was owing to the State Establishment that there were not many more—(cheers)—and it was also owing to the State Establishment that they found unsuitable, and in some cases most unworthy, pastors were forced on reluctant parishes, the spiritual interests of the people being sacrificed to the caprice or the covetousness of the pastor. Another serious evil in connection with the Church Establishment was that it deprived the Church of England of all semblance of self-government and of power to supply defects, or reform abuses, or adapt herself to the requirements of the age. The grievous blemishes in an otherwise beautiful liturgy were deplored, but how could they be removed? The Archbishop of Canterbury might say in Convocation in respect to certain damnable clauses, that no one believed them, and the Bishop of Peterborough might rejoin, "That is why I want to get rid of them." But they were not got rid of. (Hear, hear.) The Bishop of Oxford might ask the Peers in the debate on the Burials Consolidation Bill last year, "Ought a man to use strong Christian words while believing them to be utterly untrue in the particular place in which he was applying them? As the law at present stood, a clergyman at the grave-side used words which in some cases he and everybody who heard him knew to be a lie." (Hear, hear.) Remember these are the words of a bishop. (Hear, hear.) That scandal still existed. Bishops might denounce auricular confession, and even priestly absolution, but as long as a bishop was compelled to say to everybody admitted to the priesthood "Whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven, and whosoever sins thou dost retain they are retained," so long would some clergymen claim the right to exercise this power, and some penitents to seek the benefit of it. In short, the Church had no power to purge herself of her defilements even if she had the inclination. (Cheers.) Now, if the State undertook to provide religious instruction for the nation, surely they had the right to demand that she should supply the unadulterated article. There might be diversity of opinion as to what was truth, but surely the State was bound to supply that article which it undertook and professed to furnish. (Cheers.) Now the religion by law established was declared in the Coronation Oath to be the Protestant religion, and therefore that was the article which the State was bound to supply; and if it furnished an adulterated and an altogether different article, it evidently proved itself unfitted to discharge the duty which it had undertaken. But let him ask them how the converts were made who were almost daily deserting the Church of Eng-

land? Not by Romish priests who had no access to Protestant families, but by the State-paid Anglican clergymen. (Applause.) If they were to judge by results, it would seem as if the Establishment were instituted not to maintain, but to subvert, the Protestant religion. (Hear, hear.) Of the various instruments employed by the Church of Rome for the propagation of her creed, not one at the present day was more efficient than the Church of England. (Hear, hear.) It was not only that numbers went over openly to the Romish communion, but it was a still more serious consideration that a thousand, nay ten thousand times as many, were imbued with doctrines which Romish teachers themselves admitted did not differ materially from those of Rome, except with regard to the adoration of the Virgin. (Applause, and a few cries of "Time.") In fact, matters had come to this, that they must make their choice whether the Church of England was to be unprotestantised or disestablished. He might be twitted with making common cause with the sacerdotalists when he so entirely disapproved of their general principles. Well, it must be a very bad party indeed that had no good thing about it, but he thought their advocacy of disestablishment was just their one redeeming point. But in attacking the strong fortress of the Church of England (for depend upon it they would find it a strong fortress)—(Hear, hear)—they would not only want heavy artillery, but sappers and miners, and certainly it could not be denied that the sacerdotalists had shown themselves most effective in the latter branch of the service. (Cheers and laughter.) In fact, it was almost impossible to over-estimate the service which that party had rendered directly or indirectly to the cause of disestablishment. He would say only a few more words as to the means by which disestablishment was to be effected. Many, no doubt, were dispirited by the apparent strength and influence of the Church Establishment. There were so many vested rights involved, and so many pecuniary interests, that it seemed to be an almost hopeless task; but then they might remember that similar advantages did not save the Irish Establishment when its hour arrived. He thought that by a little generalship the strength of these vested rights might be converted into so many sources of weakness. Let a portion of those revenues which were at present employed to enslave a corrupt Church be employed for its emancipation. Let them take a lesson from Mr. Gladstone's book—(loud cheers)—in regard to the Irish Establishment, and give ample compensation to parsons, patrons, curates, parish clerks, and everybody, and do not forget the landed proprietor. (Laughter.) Let them make disestablishment everybody's interest, as it undoubtedly would be for the interest of religion also, and so surely as the Establishment was a corrupt and venal institution, so surely would it be overthrown. (Cheers.)

The resolution was then put to the meeting and carried by acclamation.

Professor GOLDWIN SMITH: Ladies and gentlemen,—I have been asked to move a resolution, and as the hour is late, I will move it briefly. These are its words:—

Assembled on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the repeal of the Corporation and Tests Acts, this meeting desires to express to Earl Russell, and to others associated with him in that great struggle who still survive, grateful thanks for their successful exertions to diminish the civil disabilities inflicted or maintained in the interest of the Church Establishment. The meeting rejoices at the successive measures by which that object has since been still further advanced, and anticipates with confidence the arrival of the period when perfect religious equality will be enjoyed by the British people.

We are met here to-night, ladies and gentlemen, to promote the great cause of justice in which you have been long engaged. We meet here in no spirit of animosity towards the Church of England as a church. (Applause.) We protest only against her political domination. We seek only to break off her political yoke. We acknowledge, fully acknowledge, the virtues and usefulness of many among her prelates and her clergy, and none more than her Primate, near whose residence we meet this evening, and who is regarded by Christians of all denominations in this land as a wise and good ruler of the Church of Christ. This is the fiftieth anniversary, or near it, of the repeal of the Tests and Corporation Acts, parts of the persecuting code of the Stuarts. Well known to all is that ancient tale of wrong—of wrong on one side and heroic resistance to wrong upon the other. The system of the Commonwealth would not satisfy us now, but it was a very large measure of freedom for that day. (Applause.) It fell, and the Commonwealth fell, both because they were too high for the English opinion in those times. The English nation was then as Milton says the lion was in his description of the Creation, trying to get free his lower parts from the clay; and the least noble part then had strength to pull down the nobler. Weakness and grossness recalled the Stuarts. These things of wrong arose out of sensuality and persecution. The Five Miles Act banished Nonconformists from the centres of intercourse. The Conventicles Act denied spiritual worship to the most religious part of the nation. The Tests and Corporation Acts swept them from local self-government and the public service. The Tests and Corporation Acts hit the Roman Catholics as well as the Nonconformists; but it was not Roman Catholic absolutism; it was Nonconformist love of liberty they wanted to keep out of the corporations. The Act of Uniformity, which is the last that remains of all the train, excluded the Puritans from the National

Church. The best ministers of the country were thrown by hundreds with villains into noisome prisons where many of them died—many by a death worse than the axe, worse perhaps even than the stake. The religious peasantry shared the pains of persecution, and the martyr crown of resistance. The Revolution of 1688 brought a measure of toleration, and curbed the incredible pretensions of a zealous and high State clergy, who courted the Nonconformists in their hour of peril and trampled on them when that hour was past. (Applause.) The end of the reign of Anne brought another Tory reaction and persecution with it—Toryism and rowdism are inseparable allies. (Applause.) Having thus begun to pull down the meeting houses, showing that the meeting-house was a great source of order as well as of liberty—(applause)—the Occasional Conformity Act was passed to clench the Tests Act. Another Act was passed preventing Dissenters from teaching in schools and from educating their children. Then when you prohibit Dissenters from teaching in schools, and when you have shut them out of universities, intellectual exquisites turn round to you and say, "Look at the disgusting want of culture amongst the Dissenters." (Laughter.) And who was the framer of these persecuting Acts? Who was the leader of the fanatical world in those days? A man just fit for that period, Bolingbroke—in religion an infidel, in politics a traitor, in life a debauchee. (Hear, hear.) He was the first clerical leader of that class, nor was he the last. (Hear, hear.) There followed an age of indifference, in which the teeth of the persecuting Acts were gradually drawn. Then came one of reform, in which most of them were abolished. About the last act of injustice was made, as we know, by old Lord Eldon, who was the buttress who supported the Church from without, because he never went into one—(great laughter)—and His Royal Highness the Duke of York, a great and pious friend of the Church, who got into some trouble by allowing his mistress, Mrs. Clark, to traffic in military patronage. (Renewed laughter.) I happened the other day to open a life of Lord Melbourne, in which that matter was referred to; and the biographer vindicated the Duke, and said that although he had got into this trouble, he was by no means an unconscientious man, and that he satisfied his conscience by strongly opposing Catholic Emancipation. The biographer added that the Duke, although by no means ostentatious, always went about with a Bible in his carriage. (Loud laughter.) It is pleasant, ladies and gentlemen, to recall the noble and illustrious memories of those by whom injustice was resisted—(applause)—and of Oliver Cromwell, the largest minded and the largest hearted in the whole roll of English statesmen—(renewed applause)—of John Milton—(applause)—who, in an age of darkness and general despair, poured forth his glorious song of confidence and hope; of the religious martyrs of the Restoration both in England and Scotland; of the liberal bishops, Burnet and Hadley, who helped to take off some of the chains from their Christian brethren; of the friends of religious liberty in later times, Mr. Beaufoy, Mr. Fox, Lord Brougham, and especially of Earl Russell—(cheers)—who is now closing in honour a life consistently, zealously, and successfully devoted to the cause of religious liberty. (Renewed cheers.) There is one other public man whom we should not forget this evening, who enters, I am told, to-day on his seventieth year, and who, like Earl Russell, is reposing after a long and arduous life dedicated to the same cause. People who devote themselves to principle seldom reach the most glittering prizes in politics, but they reach that which is better than the prize in a political or any other game; and such a prize I hope and believe in his last years is the lot of Edward Miall. (Loud and continued applause.) Well, gentlemen, of all those persecuting Acts of the Stuarts, the Act of Uniformity alone remains—it is the last leaf upon the Stuarts' upas tree, and it flutters already in the wind. The Act of Uniformity still lives, but it lives among the graves of its kin, and from all their tombs it hears the memento of mortality. On the tombs of the Tests and Corporation Acts, of the Five Miles Act, of the Conventicles Act, of the Occasional Conformity Act, the Act of Uniformity sees the monitory phrase—

As I now am thou soon shalt be,
Prepare thyself to follow me!

(Great applause.) Yes, the Act of Uniformity will soon follow them, for although there is at present a sort of momentary pause, a reaction by faint hearts taken to be the end of progress, still progress goes on. The world does not turn back—(Hear, hear)—the wave recedes, but the spring tide advances and brings with it resistlessly, first toleration, then religious liberty, last of all religious equality. (Cheers.) I said that faint hearts faintly see the end of progress, but the end of progress has not come. A cloud is passing, perhaps at this moment, over the political sun, but it has not put out the sun. The shadow of the cloud falls only where we were; to-morrow it will pass away. To-day you are celebrating what it was thought would never come, the repeal of the Tests and Corporation Acts. To-morrow or the day after to-morrow, within a period short for human progress, you may be celebrating the repeal of the Act of Uniformity. (Loud and prolonged applause.)

Mr. HENRY RICHARD, M.P., in seconding the resolution, said: I must confess that I did not come in very good heart to this meeting to-night, not because I abate one jot or tittle of my alle-

giance to the great question you are met to discuss, but because I have for some time past felt it difficult to turn my thoughts away from that one absorbing topic which is occupying anxiously the thoughts of the thirty millions of people that inhabit these islands—(applause)—for how can one think or speak of the repeal of the Tests and Corporation Acts, or even of the disestablishment and disendowment of the English Church, when we may be standing on the verge of a gigantic war, the extent and duration of which no human sagacity can foresee—(Hear, hear)—a war without provocation—(applause)—a war without cause—(renewed applause and a cry of "No")—a war without intelligible motive, without object, into which we are in danger of being hurled by the fault and perverseness of our rulers. (Applause.) I own that I have been cheered by the response that has been elicited from this magnificent meeting. (Loud cheers.) To the incidental allusions that have been made to this subject to-night I believe we have been deceived with regard to London; rowdism and "Jingoism" have been called to the front—(a cry of "Question")—and have misled us with regard to the population of this city. (Hear, hear.) Now, I think I may venture to say that when we get the right people together—the serious, religious, and thoughtful inhabitants of this great metropolis—we can see that on the question of peace or war London is sound to the core. (Cheers, the audience rising and waving hats.) There seems to be only one dissentient here—(laughter)—there is one gentleman who is a Disraelite indeed. (Renewed laughter.) Well, gentlemen, I rise to second the resolution which has been moved with so much ability—a resolution which has reference to the Tests and Corporation Acts. Now these two Acts form part of a series of iniquitous laws passed against Nonconformists under the reign of the Stuarts; and besides these two, there have been those already mentioned by Mr. Goldwin Smith. And it is a curious and significant fact which proves the danger of confiding authority into the hands of ecclesiastical corporations, that all these Acts were passed, and, when they were not enforced with sufficient severity, were stimulated into greater severity at the instigation of the Church and the clergy. We are sometimes told by our Church friends that the Church of England is the most tolerant Church in the world. (Laughter.) It may be so; I am not going to compare its character in that respect with other Churches; but if it be so, then the inevitable inference to be drawn from the admission is this, that no church whatever can be trusted to use the secular power for its own purpose. (Applause.) If this be the best of an Ecclesiastical Establishment—the Act of Uniformity, the Tests and Corporation Acts, the Five Miles Act, the Conventicle Act, the Act of Occasional Conformity, and the Schism Act—if those be their best, then the best is so bad that it must be an inevitable conclusion that no nation that is careful of its liberties will tolerate any Establishment at all. (Cheers.) The immediate objects of these two Acts were to exclude Dissenters from serving their country in any office, civil or military, except on condition of violating their own consciences and abandoning the faith of their fathers. They were constructed and applied with a singular ingenuity of oppression. The Dissenters were not left alone, but were sought out in order that they might be put into the office, and if they refused they were fined; and if they consented without subjecting themselves to the test, they were exposed to still more terrible punishments, and I am bound to say that the Corporation of the City of London for a long time was the most rigorous and relentless in using these laws for the oppression of the Dissenters. For many years that body nominated wealthy Nonconformists for the offices of sheriffs of London and Middlesex, not because they wanted them—for in some cases they appointed men who were bedridden and infirm—but in order simply to secure the fines which the men were obliged to pay for refusing to serve the office. (Cries of "Shame.") Those men who refused to serve the office of sheriff were fined 600*l.*; and the City of London in a comparatively short space of time raised 15,000*l.* out of the fines thus inflicted upon Dissenters, and that money was applied to the building of the present Mansion House. If so, I will venture to say that the palatial residence of our great civic dignitaries was founded on oppression and injustice to us. (Applause.) Now, gentlemen, the history of the struggle for the abolition of these Tests and Corporation Acts is full of interest and instruction; but I shall only advert to one or two isolated points. At one moment it seemed as if these oppressive laws might be abolished with the cordial consent, if not with the voluntary initiation, of the Church itself and its clergy. In the reign of James II. the Church of England was placed in a very peculiar position. When that King ascended the throne, it soon became apparent that he was determined to substitute for a free constitutional Government an absolute monarchy of the most despotic character; but while he was carrying into effect his designs; while he was collecting revenues without the sanction of Parliament; while he was stealthily gathering together a large standing army in time of peace; while, through his creatures, Jefferys and Kirke, he was inflicting cruelties upon the people of this country; while he was persecuting the Nonconformists in England, and still more atrociously persecuting the Covenanters in Scotland—while all these things

were going on the Church was dumb and quiescent, and never lifted up its voice; but when, by the exercise of his power, and without the authority of Parliament, he proposed to issue a declaration of unlimited toleration to the Roman Catholics and to the Protestant Dissenters, then all the clergy were up in arms against him. The words that were applied falsely by Satan to Job, as regards the service of the Most High, might have been truly applied to the clergy as respects the service of the King and Crown; and James might have been addressed:—"Do the clergy serve the king for naught? Hast thou not made an hedge about them, and about the house, and about all that they have on every side? But put forth thine hand and touch what they have—(laughter)—and they will curse thee to thy face." (Renewed laughter and cheers.) And they did; they cursed him to his face, and with very considerable emphasis, too. Using the words of Daniel Defoe, "Pacific pulpits beat the drum ecclesiastic of war; absolute subjection took up arms; obedience, for conscience' sake, resisted Divine right." (Cheers.) Well, how did Nonconformists act in this emergency? That declaration of James redounded to their advantage. It lifted from their shoulders a heavy yoke of persecution beneath which they had been crushed for many years. Nay, more. The King was inclined to bestow upon them special tokens of his favour; he was willing to take them from the gaols and offer to them office, honour, and emoluments, to welcome them to the Court with smiles and benedictions; but the Nonconformists refused all these offers—(cheers)—they said, "No, we cannot take privileges that are offered to us in violation of the Constitution of our country. We would rather remain still longer under those oppressive laws than accept deliverance by a method that aims a blow at the fundamental freedom of our country." (Loud cheers.) And while that conflict was going on the clergy admired and eulogised the conduct of the Nonconformists to the skies. They were flattered and fondled and caressed. Bishops and archbishops said they were "our dear Protestant Nonconformist brethren"—(laughter)—and that scruples of conscience must be treated with the most tender regard; but when the occasion was passed all their professions were forgotten. Varying, as Daniel Defoe said, the old distich—

The Devil was sick, the Devil a monk would be—
The Devil got well, the devil a monk was he.

(Cheers and laughter.) Mr. Richard then went on to say that when William III. came in, the Dissenters were in hopes that the time of the deliverance was come; but the men at the head of affairs were a timid and time-serving generation, though they called themselves professedly deliverers. Although a Toleration Act was granted them the very name of it was an insult. When Queen Anne succeeded, the clergy used the power that bigoted woman put into their hands—the Occasional Uniformity Act and the Schism Act—which would have deprived Dissenters of every fragment of liberty they previously possessed. The Schism Act came into operation just before the death of Queen Anne. He would not follow out the history. There were efforts made in 1732 to get these laws repealed, but Sir Robert Walpole and those who professed Liberalism discountenanced the efforts, and they were lost. For fifty years their forefathers were discouraged, and made no further effort, but in 1787 another effort was made by Beaufoy, who made a most admirable speech in advocating their cause. Then came Mr. C. J. Fox, who, in a series of speeches taking the very loftiest ground of religious liberty and equality, supported their claims. Then came the French Revolution and an outbreak of violent fanaticism which compelled Dissenters almost to hide their heads for a time; but at length, in the year 1828, at the request of the Deputies of Three Denominations of the religious community, Lord John Russell took up the question. Mr. Richard proceeded:—

On Feb. 26, 1828, he submitted his motion to the House, and was opposed by the whole strength of the Government, and by Mr. Peel (the late Sir Robert Peel), by Mr. Huskisson, and by Lord Palmerston; but his motion was supported by a band, among whom was Lord Althorp, Lord Milton, Lord Nugent, and by Henry Brougham—(cheers)—and at length the motion was carried by 237 to 193. Several efforts were made in committee to induce Lord Russell to accept some compromise. They proposed that the laws should be suspended, and not repealed, but he stood firm and unswerving, and then it was the abolition of the laws was at length passed unanimously in the House, as Sir Robert Peel saw it was in vain to offer any further opposition. It was carried to the House of Lords, and committed to the hands of that true friend to civil and religious liberty, Lord Holland—(Hear, hear)—and on May 9, 1828, it passed into law. (Cheers.) That is fifty years to-morrow. Now, gentlemen, to-morrow we are going down to Richmond to present an address to that venerable statesman, Lord Russell—(loud cheers)—who took so conspicuous and honourable a part in that great work, and to congratulate him upon having lived to see the jubilee of his own great conquest—(cheers)—and to express to him our gratitude not only for what he did then, but for his consistent fidelity to the cause of religious liberty throughout a long life. (Cheers.) I wish that the condition of Lord Russell's health would have allowed this presentation to have been made in public; and I am quite sure, if that had been the case, the largest room in this metropolis would not have contained the thousands of Nonconformists that would have wished to be there to do homage to the venerable man. (Hear, hear.) I am to be one of those who are to see him to-morrow, and as chairman of the Deputies, I believe I shall have the distinguished honour of

introducing the deputation to him. Shall I, in the name of this magnificent meeting of 5,000 or 6,000 Nonconformists carry for you your cordial and respectful greeting to Earl Russell. (Loud cries of "Yes" and cheers, the audience rising and waving hats and handkerchiefs enthusiastically.) Shall I tell him in your name—for I may regard you to-night as the representatives of the Nonconformists of the three kingdoms—shall I tell him how keenly you appreciate his services, and how deeply you venerate his name and his character? (Renewed cries of "Yes" and vociferous cheers.)

Mr. S. D. WADDY supported the resolution, and offered a few words, partly in explanation of the precise relationship which he for one held towards this great and important question. He belonged, he said, to a religious body in this country, which had the credit of being what had been termed weak-kneed with regard to the question of disestablishment. He was not very sure that he was very strong on his own legs—(laughter)—but if anybody was troubled with symptoms of shaking, and wanted a good strong tonic, they could not have done better than attend this meeting. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) They were all aware of the annoyance and difficulties which Methodists had to undergo in relation to Church Establishment. Without wishing to say one word which the most earnest Establishmentarian would consider ill-tempered, and without wishing to see the Church of England one whit less vigorous and powerful and useful than she was at the present moment, he could not forget that wherever disestablishment had taken place it had not crushed, but had benefited the Church to which it had been applied. (Hear, hear.) In Jamaica, for instance, the friends of the Church were surprised to see how powerful she had become there in five years only after disestablishment took place. Wesleyan Methodists considered that they were not quite fairly treated in certain matters by the state of things which existed under the Establishment. They felt it in respect to marriage and burial, and in the paltry tyranny frequently exercised in the matter of education. They felt it in the matter of a State official at the ceremony of marriage, without whom a register of the event, it was supposed, could not be kept. But he was at a loss to know why a Wesleyan Methodist preacher, or even a verger, might not be trusted to make the entries in a register. It was thought to be undesirable that there should be any distinction made, but if it was a good thing for Methodists it must be good also for other people; and if was not good for others it was not good for Methodists. Then, again, in regard to burials, there had been, as they were aware, what had been called "scenes in churchyards," and specimens of paltry tyranny in the agricultural districts; but of course there was no such tyranny exercised in London because they would not dare to exercise it except in some quiet village where the whole social power of the place was in the hands of two or three people. This sort of insult had been a subject-matter before the House of Commons, but some people objected to such small affairs being brought before Parliament. The reason why that course was taken was because if a complaint was made to the bishop very little notice was taken of it. The bishop, of course, would know that the act complained of was illegal, and would communicate with the clergyman; but in every case where this had been done, except one, the only result had been a communication from the clergyman, not saying that he was sorry, or that he had done an unchristian thing, but merely that "he had discovered," after a consultation with the bishop, "that he had exceeded the letter of the law"—a very nice solution of the difficulty. If the fault rested with the bishop, then something ought to be done to bring him to book, but if the bishop had no power to punish an offender, then such a power ought to be given him. (Hear, hear.) It might be said to Methodists, "Why don't you become strong Liberationists, and go in hot and strong for disestablishment?" If he were a member of the Church of England, or if he did not belong to any Church at all, he should become a very hearty Liberationist; but the fact was there had been a gradual growth of opinion under the influence of which the Establishment was working its own destruction; and, as the resolution said, they rejoiced at the successive measures by which the object they had in view had been advanced, and they anticipated with confidence the arrival of the period when perfect religious equality would be enjoyed by the British people. For himself he would rather that this business should be done by the Church itself, and he believed it would be. (A cry of "No.") At all events, it was being done very fast. Only the other day he read in a Church paper that the Primate was a traitor, and he believed that even if Nonconformists did not prosecute this movement, the defences of the Establishment would before long fall to pieces, like the image that the prophet saw in his vision. (Applause.) He believed this subject was growing, and that no one could stop it, for it was a part of the grand growth of religious liberty. When once begun there was no staying the tide, and he did not believe that at this moment there was one reasoning or thinking man in the country, who knew anything about the history of his country, who could have the slightest doubt that the Establishment was doomed. It was a simple question of time. (Cheers.)

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Mr. GEORGE HOWELL moved the third resolution:—

In view of the possibility of an early general election, the meeting trusts that the Society's friends will exert their electoral influence in all the constituencies to

secure the return of an increased number of representatives pledged to a policy of disestablishment.

He said he would assume that all were agreed that religion, as a matter of conscience, was a matter with which the State should not interfere, and that the very fact of a Church Establishment violated the first principles not only of religious but civil liberty. He believed they had a great battle to fight, and that all the eloquent speeches that might be made on platforms would fail to accomplish the object they had in view. As a rule he did not agree that exacting a set of propositions from a candidate at the hustings would answer the end they had in view, for very frequently a pledge which a candidate might make during an election contest was violated as soon as ever he entered the House of Commons. But he would advise that pressure should be brought to bear on candidates not only during election contests, but during the whole period for which representatives were elected. By this means he thought they would be able in time to compass disestablishment. The vested interests in the Establishment were vast, and the men who lived by its plunder would resist this movement, however good the men in the Church might be, and however desirous they might themselves be to reform it. It therefore became their duty, in the spirit of the resolution, to exact pledges from candidates whenever they came before the constituencies. He thought the time would come when Nonconformists would get rid of some of their own narrow prejudices. He had had some experience in election contests, and had to contend against a mass of misinformed and uninformed Nonconformist opinion, and he had found it was frequently the case that Nonconformists branded a set of men in this country, because they did not belong to this or that religious body, as Atheists and infidels, who no more deserved the name than did the pastor of that church. In fighting out this battle Nonconformists must welcome under their standard all men of whatever shade of opinion, so long as they would help rightly in this great movement. When there was such a gigantic evil existing as this Church Establishment, not only religiously, but socially and politically, they must all combine to eradicate it. The Establishment was a political institution, established by law, endowed and maintained by law, and it would have to be disestablished by law. The general election must soon come, and they would have to reckon with a great number of men who now sat in Parliament—not only on the Tory side, but on the Liberal benches also. He was sick of the disorganised hypocrisy of the front Opposition bench, and they would have to educate their leaders as well as the rank-and-file. In effect, their energies were being spent and exhausted before they could reach their proper foes. It was time this disorganised hypocrisy should cease, and they should send men to Parliament who knew what they meant to do, and would do it when they got there. (Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN announced that Dr. R. Smyth, M.P., had telegraphed from the House of Commons that he would be unable to be present, and the resolution would therefore be seconded by Mr. Cuff.

The Rev. WILLIAM CUFF seconded the resolution, and said he was proud to stand in the midst of the adherents of the Liberation Society, if only for five minutes. Some of their leaders would soon put off the armour which they had worn for forty years, and which was worn without stain. He felt a peculiar thrill going through him when it was announced by Mr. Goldwin Smith that Mr. Edward Miall was seventy years old that day, and he breathed a prayer that there might rise up in the years that were coming many of the sons of merchants of this country who should be as intelligent, and who should be as clearly convinced, and as well able to enunciate their convictions, as Mr. Edward Miall had been. He hoped that the large majority of the young ministers who were now growing up would make it their business to inform themselves upon a question of so much importance as disestablishment and disendowment, so that when their fathers dropped their colours they would do their best to take care of them and keep them up. (Hear, hear.) They would be putting on armour that had been tested and tried, and would not be afraid to go forth to the fight. Let them use plain Saxon words, simple and round, in order that they might tell members of Parliament and bishops belonging to the State-Church, and the pretty little lapping priests of the day—(laugh)—that there should be no rest in the Nonconformist pulpits till the Church of England was disestablished and disendowed. (Cheers.) They must tell these pretty little priests that they were not the men who could satisfy the thoughtful minds of the country or create a character that would make the nation greater still. As he had said, they were clothed with a gear that had been tested, but better still, the Lord of Hosts was with them, the God of Jacob was their refuge. They were hopeful and resolute men. He was not in sympathy with those who were losing heart. Their fathers had taken the outposts and some of the forts, and their sons, God helping them, would scale the heights of the citadel itself and batter it down, bit by bit, till the victory was complete. He should like to dispel the illusion that the Establishment was on the wane, and that there was not so much to be done now as there was some years ago. He was thankful that the resolution moved by Mr. Howell expressed what it did. He was aware that they had been advised not to make disestablish-

ment and disendowment a test question, but what he wanted to know was, When would the time come for the Nonconformists to make it a test question, and to demand of their legislators what they would do when they got into the House? They had waited patiently, and had pleaded earnestly for this, but the Executive of the Liberation Society behind them had kept them back from demanding it or doing any very rash thing; but he would submit to the politicians of to-day, if they were to go on with a timid and half-hearted policy, that in that event they would be twitted in not having succeeded more than they had done already. In past history great questions had waited for settlement; but at last the day had dawned, when those questions were made test questions. and when men had been found to come forward to represent constituencies willing to vote as they were desired to do. He did not say that the time had come already for this to be made a test question, but what he wanted to ask was whether they were still to go on from day to day and from year to year and never make it a test question. When the time came the citadel would almost be taken, and their victory would be nearer than at the present time. Might the day dawn quickly, and he for one would be glad. (Applause.)

The resolution was then carried unanimously.

On the motion of Mr. THOMAS BLAKE, M.P., seconded by Mr. WILLIAM WILLIS, a vote of thanks was given to the chairman for presiding, and the proceedings terminated.

THE LEICESTER CONFERENCE MOVEMENT.

The friends of the Leicester Conference movement held a meeting on Tuesday evening at the Cannon-street Hotel, and notwithstanding the heavy downpour of rain there was a large attendance. Many ministers were present, and a considerable number of ladies. The chair was taken by Mr. J. B. Brindley. The meeting was convened as "a public meeting for the promotion of religious communion amongst those who differ in theological opinions," and perfect unanimity prevailed throughout. After singing and the reading of Scripture, and prayer by the Rev. Mr. BYLES, the CHAIRMAN briefly opened the proceedings of the meeting, and called upon the Rev. P. T. Forsyth, M.A., to read a paper on "A Larger Comprehension a Remedy for the Decay of Theology." Mr. FORSYTH announced that he was, on the whole, orthodox, and he thought it could not be too strongly insisted upon that the friends of this movement did not commit themselves to the opinions of the leaders of the movement. Mr. Forsyth's paper was received with great favour, and he was much cheered on resuming his seat. The Chairman then called on the Rev. William Miall to read a paper on "The Unity of the Faith." The feature of the paper was the insistence on the supremacy of the doctrine that God is love, and that love to God was the one all-sufficient bond of unity.

The Rev. MARK WILKS, in moving the thanks of the meeting to the readers of the two papers, commended them for the calmness and perfect freedom from passion and prejudice with which they had treated their subjects. He did not agree entirely with the conclusions of either of their friends, and he had, therefore, all the more pleasure in proposing that the meeting should thank them. Their movement was a most important one. Whoever might smile at it, they could not, for they regarded it as one of the most serious matters to which they could put their hands. They had no hostility to the Congregational Union, or, indeed, to any existing organisation. They found a great number of people wandering about with an earnest religious conviction which precluded their identifying themselves with any existing churches, and they said to them, "Come and commune with us." It was not a question of difference of creeds but of a common sentiment and purpose in desiring to promote the practical ends of life, and to work for the good of themselves and their neighbours. They had no thought of disturbing anybody by what they had done at Leicester, although it appeared that official persons had been disturbed in their serenity. It was everywhere felt that the great thing they needed was more unity. The want of it everywhere occasioned a waste of time and money, and all their mission-fields rebuked them for the same thing. But no intellectual basis of unity was now possible. There was no external authority for such a basis. It was not to be found in the Bible. There were those present who could with him look back five-and-twenty years, and note the marvellous changes which had taken place since then in religious opinion. There was little hope at that time that the Rev. Baldwin Brown would ever be chairman of the Congregational Union, and no one would have supposed that the Rev. Edward White would ever have become one of its ablest if one of its bitterest supporters. Mr. Wilks concluded by announcing that the papers they had heard read would in the course of a few days be published, and that on the following evening a devotional meeting would be held at the St. Thomas' Square Church, Hackney (Mr. Picton's) when the Rev. John Rodgers, M.A., vicar of Charterhouse, would preside, and brief addresses would be given by several friends of the movement.

Mr. CLODD seconded the resolution. As a layman, unattached, he was anxious to express his sympathy with the movement, which was in no sense aggressive or controversial, but was essen-

tially constructive. He referred to the disintegration of creeds which was going on around them, and to the effect it had on many earnest minds, which were driven here and there, blown about by every wind of thought. The authority of Scripture was no longer an authority for any man who thinks or reads. It came continually into collision with the discoveries of science, and the results of inquiry, which cut away the very foundations on which the faith of many was based. But religion did not rest on cosmogonies. The resolution was carried unanimously, and Mr. Forsyth briefly replied.

Mr. J. A. PICTON, M.A., proposed the thanks of the meeting to the chairman. He wished to emphasise one aspect of the movement to which sufficient attention had not been given. Their main object was a religious one,—religious he meant in the old-fashioned sense of the word. He spoke with great earnestness of the religious benefit of which he believed their movement would be the means of conferring on young people, especially those who, conversant with our popular literature, and fully aware of the fact that whenever any man rose to eminence in science he was sure to cast away many of the beliefs which they had been taught to regard as essential, were in danger of being driven to give up religion altogether. They wanted to assure such young persons that they could still be religious, and yet hold their judgment in suspense in reference to these doctrines. He pleaded for the possibility of religious communion between persons of divergent or of opposite beliefs, and closed with a touching reference to an incident in his own personal history. He had that morning received the intimation of the death under circumstances of great suffering of the dearest friend he had ever had, and it called to his mind that, years ago, when he was himself stricken down with overwhelming grief, and on the borders of despair, that same friend had come to him in the darkened room in which he sat, and like Job's friends of old, took his place in silence, and so remained. At length, unable to bear the silence, he (Mr. Picton) said, "Can't you pray?" and his friend answered, "No"; but, pointing to a copy of Albert Durer's Crucifixion, which hung over the mantelpiece, with its wonderful representation of Divine submission and acquiescence on the face of the dead Saviour, he said, "that is enough." And he (Mr. Picton) felt at the moment that it was enough to call him back from absorption in his own grief, to submission to the will of the Supreme, and to renewed work for the Master. And though, he said, his religious convictions had greatly changed since then, he still felt that "it was enough," that the Cross of Christ was still the source of the same holy inspiration.

Mr. E. J. HARRY seconded the resolution. As one of the officers of a Congregational church he thought it was very important that the members of our congregations should encourage their pastors to speak out frankly all their thoughts in reference to religious opinion.

Mr. DOTHIE inquired whether it was permissible to ask questions.

Mr. PICTON said that if the questions were *bona fide* for information they would be glad to have them. But at Leicester catch questions had been put, and they were not there to answer such questions now. It was a meeting of the friends of the movement.

Mr. DOTHIE replied that his question was certainly *bona fide*. He wished to ask whether it was to be understood that in giving their adhesion to that movement, they were to be understood as giving up the old orthodox doctrines? (Cries of "No.") Mr. PICTON said certainly not; and Mr. FORSYTH said he had distinctly advocated the movement from the orthodox standpoint. Mr. DOTHIE said he was glad to have called forth that emphatic declaration, because he thought there was much misapprehension on the point. The resolution was then put and acknowledged, and the meeting closed.

Epitome of News.

The Queen, the Crown Princess of Germany, and Princess Beatrice attended Divine service on Sunday in the private chapel at Windsor; the Rev. H. Montagu Butler, D.D., Headmaster of Harrow School, preached.

Her Majesty came to town on Tuesday, and will remain at Buckingham Palace till to-morrow.

According to a Berlin telegram, the Queen congratulated the Czar on the attainment of his sixtieth year.

The Princess of Wales and the Crown Princess of Denmark are with the Prince of Wales in Paris.

The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh left Malta on Saturday with their family on their way to Venice. The Duke returns at once to take the command of the Black Prince, in which he will proceed to Port Said. The Duchess proceeds to Coburg, to remain for her approaching accouchement.

Hobart Pasha, Admiral of the Ottoman Navy, and lately engaged in putting down the Greek insurrection in Thessaly, had the honour of dining with the Queen on Saturday.

Her Majesty will shortly hold a review of the troops now assembled at Aldershot Camp. It is expected that Her Majesty will proceed from Windsor by special train to the camp on the day of the review and return in the evening.

All the Ministers were present at the Cabinet Council held on Saturday.

Lord and Lady Derby have gone to Paris.

The Liverpool Liberal Association recently passed a resolution commending the conduct of Lord Derby in retiring from the Ministry. His lordship has just acknowledged the receipt of the resolution, saying he still trusts peace may be preserved, and that "on both sides, Liberals and Conservatives alike, we shall agree to treat with as little admixture of party spirit as is possible in political affairs, a question of which the decision may involve issues infinitely more important than the success or failure of any political party."

The official announcement is published that the Queen has conferred upon Mr. Gathorne Hardy the dignity of a Viscount of the United Kingdom, the title being Viscount Cranbrook, of Hemstead, in the county of Kent.

Sir John Gilbert, R.A., in the absence of Sir Francis Grant, who was unable to be present through an attack of illness, presided on Saturday evening at the annual banquet preparatory to the opening of the Royal Academy Exhibition on Monday. The Duke of Cambridge responded for the army, the First Lord of the Admiralty for the navy, the Earl of Beaconsfield for Her Majesty's Ministers, Sir William Armstrong for the interests of science, Lord Houghton for those of literature, the Lord Mayor for the City of London; and the Lord Chancellor, who replied for the guests, proposed the health of the President and prosperity to the Royal Academy, which was acknowledged by the chairman. The Premier confined his observations to matters connected with art. He considered it the duty of the Government to do all that was possible to encourage its development, though the criticisms passed upon the action of Ministries were often of a strongly inconsistent kind.

On Saturday the Archdeacon of Ely, in his visitation charge at Cambridge, spoke of the Liberation Society's scheme for the disestablishment of the Church as a wicked project, and entreated all Churchmen to resist strenuously the effort to enter the churchyards. He advocated the provision of parish burial grounds by private gift or public purchase.

With regard to the wreck of the Eurydice, the failures of the previous efforts to raise the sunken vessel have not been without their effect. The raising power to be employed will be three times as great as that which was last unsuccessful, and it is believed that the result will be the floating of the ship.

Mr. O'Donnell, M.P., addressed a large meeting at Dungarvan on Saturday, and met with a cordial reception. There was a long procession, which included brass bands, banners, and emblems of the national colour; and, the weather being fine, the town was crowded with people from the surrounding districts.

A letter was read at the meeting of the Common Council on Thursday from Mr. Russell Gurney, M.P., formerly Recorder, suggesting the granting of a pension for his services. A motion having been made to refer the matter to a committee, an amendment was moved that it was undesirable and inexpedient to entertain the question. This was carried by a large majority.

At a meeting of the Hull Reform Union, which includes the advanced Liberal party, the general conduct of Mr. Norwood, the senior Liberal member for the borough, on the Eastern Question was considered. A resolution was unanimously passed expressing unqualified disapproval of his conduct, and declaring that he had ceased to represent the views of the Liberal party in Hull.

On Thursday evening, Sir Francis Goldsmid, M.P. for Reading, on the arrival of the Southampton train at Waterloo Station, slipped in stepping out of one of the carriages before the train had stopped, and fell between the train and the platform. He was very much injured, and conveyed on a stretcher to St. Thomas's Hospital, where he died shortly after his admission. Lady Goldsmid arrived at the hospital after her husband had expired. The deceased baronet was seventy years of age, and was a Liberal in politics.

It is stated that Mr. McCarthy, of Limerick, for whom Mr. Butt obtained an Indian property worth four millions, has in gratitude presented Mr. Butt with ten thousand pounds, and possibly this windfall may induce him to resume his old post.

The Right Hon. W. E. Forster is detained in the South of France in consequence of having broken the small bone of his leg in a carriage accident.

The Midland Railway Company have introduced the telephone into their establishment at Derby, and are employing it in several of their principal departments, where it has been pronounced to be a complete success.

The Manchester School Board have passed a resolution to the effect that immediate legislation is urgently needed to obviate the evils resulting from the hawking of newspapers and other articles in the streets by children of tender years, and at unreasonable hours of the night.

There seems to be a rather serious dissension in the Liberal party in Birmingham. Mr. George Dixon, formerly member for the borough, is extremely dissatisfied with his successor in the representation, Mr. Chamberlain. Mr. Dixon announced on Thursday his resignation of the chairmanship of the School Board, on the ground that he had been slighted by being omitted from the list of governors of the Free Grammar School, which the Town Council is entitled to nominate. Mr. Dixon attributed the slight to Mr. Chamberlain, and made a strong personal attack on that gentleman.

Appropos of the forthcoming marriage of Lord

Hartington, *Mayfair* says:—"It will personally be exceedingly awkward for the leader of the Opposition should a dissolution take place in the autumn. The noble Marquis has made arrangements to consecrate the recess to the joys and duties of the honeymoon, and to be called upon at that time to play a part in a political crisis would obviously be highly inconvenient."

There is stated to be great excitement at St. Petersburg in consequence of the news that the English Government is preparing a fleet for the Baltic.

The Russian Ambassador at Constantinople will soon be reappointed. Prince Lobanoff will take the place of General Ignatieff. He is understood to be in favour of an amicable arrangement of existing differences.

According to the latest accounts, Prince Gortschakoff's state of health has not improved. His feet are still swollen, and the consequent sleeplessness tends to increase his state of weakness, which, at his age, excites uneasiness.

Count Schouvaloff is expected at St. Petersburg from London in the course of the present week, and much importance is attached to his visit. It is understood that the Count will not prolong his stay at St. Petersburg beyond a fortnight.

The Grand Duke Nicholas arrived at St. Petersburg on Saturday afternoon, and was received at the railway station by the Emperor, the Czarewitch, and the other members of the Imperial family. A large crowd assembled and loudly cheered the Grand Duke.

The insurgent leaders in Thessaly have, it is stated, undertaken to withdraw into Greece until their case has been considered by a European Conference, the British Government having, it is said, pledged itself to introduce the claims of the Greek subjects of Turkey; and a complete amnesty is to be granted to those who have been in revolt.

British agents are buying horses throughout the Northern and Western States of America. These purchases may reach 30,000 animals, and are agitating American horse markets, causing advancing prices.

The Emperor William has conferred upon the Czar the Order *Pour le Mérite*, together with a portrait of Frederick the Great, and an autographic letter in which the following words occurred—"My army will feel proud to see this order on the breast of your Majesty."

The second detachment of the native Indian force has sailed for Malta, having embarked amidst an enthusiastic demonstration.

General Baker Pasha has been appointed to the command of the First Corps d'Armée for the defence of Constantinople. Colonel Charles Baker, V.C., and Colonel Allix are attached to his staff.

The *Cologne Gazette* says that Vera Zasulitch has not fallen into the hands of the police. She is, on the contrary, in safety.

Father Curci is said to have signed a complete recantation of his recent teachings, which were objected to by the Church. The recantation was published by the *Union* yesterday. The ex-Jesuit declares that he entirely adheres to all the teaching of the Church on the subject of the Temporal Power.

THE PARIS EXHIBITION.

The rains and frequent thunderstorms interfered greatly on Wednesday week with the success of the opening ceremonial of the Paris Exhibition. There was also considerable confusion owing to the imperfection of the arrangements made for the reception of visitors. At one o'clock escorts of honour were sent to the hotels of the Presidents of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, the Prince of Wales, the Crown Prince of Denmark, Prince Amadeus of Italy, Prince Henry of Holland, the Prince of Orange, and Don Francis of Assisi, to conduct them to the Exhibition building. At two o'clock Marshal MacMahon and the above distinguished personages, together with the Ministers, the Senators, the Deputies, and the Diplomatic Body, assembled in the Toccadero Hall. A salute of one hundred guns was fired on their arrival, and the Minister of Commerce having made a speech, Marshal MacMahon formally declared the Exhibition open. Guns were then fired, the waters of the great cascade began to play, and a procession was formed, headed by the Marshal, which made a tour of the entire building. The day was observed throughout Paris as a holiday, and at night the illuminations were general. In the evening the Marshal entertained the Prince of Wales and other royal visitors, a brilliant reception being afterwards held.

Lord Granville presided at a banquet given on Saturday night to the Prince of Wales by the British exhibitors in the Paris Exhibition. The banquet took place at the Hotel du Louvre, and covers were laid for 200. Among those present were Senator Krantz, Lord Northbrook, M. Teisserenc de Bort, the Duke of Manchester, the Duke of Sutherland, and Mr. Lyon Playfair. The first toast proposed was "The Queen," which was received with great enthusiasm, and this was followed by the toast of "The President of the French Republic," which was proposed by the Prince of Wales. The Prince afterwards proposed, speaking in French, "Prosperity to France, and success to the Exhibition." He said that fortunately he was born after national animosities and rivalries had ceased. He remembered only the kindness and hospitality of France, and he hoped that the good feeling which now existed between the two nations would be perpetual.

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BRITISH AND FOREIGN SCHOOL SOCIETY. The SEVENTY-THIRD GENERAL MEETING of this Society will be held on THURSDAY, May 16, 1878, in the LECTURE HALL, BOROUGH ROAD TRAINING COLLEGE. The Chair will be taken by the Right Honourable the EARL GRANVILLE.

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The Nonconformist.

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 1878.

THE WEEK.

THE House of Commons reassembled on Monday after the long Easter recess. There was an angry discussion relative to the order for despatching native Indian troops to Malta, as to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the step was neither more nor less than a direction given by Her Majesty for moving a portion of her forces from one part of the Empire to another, and that under any circumstances the Government would not have thought it their duty to make a communication to Parliament on the subject until the arrangements had been completed. This off-hand explanation did not, however, satisfy the Liberal benches, and gave rise to an animated discussion, to which we have referred elsewhere. On the one question of paramount interest no information was vouchsafed. In reply to a question from the Marquis of Hartington, Sir Stafford Northcote stated that active negotiations were still going on, but he deprecated any general discussion as likely to be at the present moment exceedingly disadvantageous to the public service. From other sources we learn that Count Schouvaloff, the Russian Minister, left London yesterday for St. Petersburg on a fortnight's leave of absence. Great importance is attached to this mission. It is believed that the Count, who had an interview with Lord Beaconsfield just before his departure, will take with him an explanation of the precise views of our Government relative to the Treaty of San Stefano, and will be prepared, from his general knowledge of English opinion, to give advice to his Imperial master. There can be no doubt that his mission is one of peace and conciliation. At present the Czar may be said to be his own Foreign Minister. Prince Gortschakoff is entirely disabled, and perhaps his career as a diplomatist is ended, while General Ignatieff, the author of the notorious Treaty, is out of favour. The fact that the Emperor Alexander desires to take counsel of Count Schouvaloff, is therefore in itself significant. That diplomatist is notoriously adverse to the policy out of which sprung the "preliminary Treaty"—the policy of Russian aggrandisement. His visit to St. Petersburg gives hope that our Government have waived their obnoxious formula, and are ready, in accordance with the advice of Lord Derby, to enter upon preliminary negotiations with a view to such substantial concessions as will pave the way to the meeting of a Congress.

According to a statement from Vienna the Emperor Alexander has himself forwarded to London a series of propositions, with a view to a satisfactory modification of the Treaty of San Stefano, and perhaps Count Schouvaloff is in possession of the opinions of our Government on the subject. Nothing is of course known as to their precise import. It may be worth while to quote the conclusions at which the experienced correspondent of the *Daily News* at Constantinople has arrived relative to the changes which would make the treaty satisfactory from a European point of view. He proposes:—

1. The substitution of an International Commission for the Russian Imperial Commissioner to introduce the new institutions of Bulgaria.
2. A commission to take the census, with the view of correcting the frontier on the west, if need be.
3. Extension of the boundary of Bulgaria to the Maritza on the south-east, so as to give the port of Enos to the new Principality, thus giving the Bulgarians no grievance for Russia to redress.
4. The absolute neutrality of Bulgaria under the guaranty of Europe or of England, thus preventing the possibility of a Russian army ever again marching upon Constantinople by way of Bulgaria without meeting an English army on the banks of the Danube.
5. Administrative autonomy for Thessaly, Epirus, and Albania, with a view to their ultimate gravitation towards Greece. Administrative autonomy for Bosnia, with a view to its ultimate union with Serbia and Bulgaria.
6. Administrative reforms introduced into all other parts of the Ottoman Empire by means of an International Commission, thus taking from Russia the possibility of a future pretext for interference on behalf of the Christians.

The writer thinks that these changes would not

only guarantee English as well as European interests, but that Russia would accept them without war. We trust his belief is well founded. Again and again we have been told by the semi-official newspapers of St. Petersburg that the Czar is prepared to make large concessions, and so to modify the preliminary Treaty as to make it a European settlement.

The news from South-Eastern Europe is not, meanwhile, such as to cause serious anxiety. General Todleben urges, but in no menacing way, the evacuation of Shumla, Varna, and Batoum. He is content to await the issue of Count Schouvaloff's visit to St. Petersburg, and as the Turks are now strong enough to defend Constantinople, he is said to be about to retire to the lines of Tchataldja, leaving a small force only at San Stefano—a decision hastened probably by the formidable nature of the Musulman insurrection around the Rhodope Mountains, as well as by his desire to obtain possession of the ceded fortresses. As was expected, the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is further postponed, and it is authoritatively announced that there is no prospect of a separate arrangement between the Courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg. With regard to the insurrection in Thessaly, Sir Stafford Northcote was able to inform the House of Commons on Monday that a pacification upon equitable terms was likely to be secured, and once again the insurgents have been assured that their claims to consideration will in due time be urged by the British Government.

We have not space to give any fitting record of the important movements during the past week to protest against the war policy of the Government—of the Conference of Agricultural Delegates at the Memorial Hall on Saturday last, presided over by Mr. Arch, at which more than six hundred delegates were present; and of the conferences of working men on the same afternoon, and for the same purpose, at Liverpool, Leeds, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. At each of these remarkable gatherings, which without doubt reflect the opinions of the mass of intelligent artisans and labourers throughout the country, resolutions were enthusiastically passed strongly protesting against the policy of Her Majesty's Ministers, repudiating the statements repeatedly made by the Government and their organs that the warlike preparations are made in the interests of peace, and insisting that the Cabinet should endeavour to adjust its differences with Russia either by means of a Congress or by arbitration, as provided in the Treaty of Paris. Coupled with the great meeting held at Birmingham, and the influentially-signed memorials to the Queen against a warlike policy, these demonstrations have produced a great impression, if they have not influenced the Government in seriously seeking for a better understanding with the Russian Government through the agency of Count Schouvaloff. At present, undoubtedly, the hopes of a pacific arrangement are strong. Indeed, Sir Stafford Northcote was able to assure an Oxford audience yesterday that our difficulties "are now beginning to approach a termination."

The transparent job for fastening upon the ratepayers of Bermondsey, by means of a moribund vestry, the future income of the rector, has been too much even for a Tory House of Commons. The Bill, which came on for second reading on Monday night, proposed that the vestry should purchase nearly 7,000l. in Consols, and transfer the amount to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who were good enough to promise to add 200l. annually to the 200l. thus secured out of the pockets of the ratepayers, and thus make the vicar and his successors comfortable. Though there was a strong muster of Tory members on Monday night, the opponents of ecclesiastical jobbery mustered still more strongly, and the Bill was thrown out by a majority of five (122 to 117 votes).

The International Exhibition was opened last week in Paris with as much *éclat* as could

be expected in the present state of political disquietude. Though the weather on the first of May was not favourable, and the Exhibition very far from complete, the day was a national festival. The Exhibition has come to be identified with the young and triumphant Republic, and the people feel that even on political grounds they are bound to make it a success. Hence the frank and cordial expressions of the Prince of Wales, combined with his active interest in the great show, have made him the most popular foreigner in France. A fine summer and moderate hotel tariffs—the latter, perhaps, the most improbable—will help to make the Exhibition a success, and that may materially contribute to the consolidation of the Republic.

SKETCHES FROM THE GALLERY.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, Tuesday night.

Hon. members returned to their duties after the Easter recess with quite unwonted gusto. The House of Lords, which is always enabled, from its superior altitude, to regard with easy indifference political crises, extends its holiday by another week. But the impression among many hon. members of the Commons was that nearly three weeks holiday was at least quite enough. So they came back in crowds yesterday, filling most of the benches, the front Opposition bench looking comparatively empty. The Marquis of Hartington was there, which makes up for a good deal in the way of giving an unwontedly full appearance to this part of the House. Mr. Gladstone had taken French leave, and so had Mr. Bright, who finds Llandudno preferable to Westminster in these fair days of high spring.

The notices of motion struck the key-note of the thought which filled everybody's mind. There were no less than five notices of motion and of questions with respect to the great Disraelian scheme of bringing Indian troops to take part in European warfare. Each successive notice was received with ironical cheers, and even more uncompromising expressions of impatience from the Ministerial benches. The old legal aphorism, which indicates the course to be taken by the defendant where he "has no case," is slightly altered in the House of Commons. The new rule in that august body is that where Ministers have no case, Ministerialists must howl down the Opposition. This some hon. members do with great personal satisfaction, but with varied success. They began with Sir George Campbell, when he gave notice of his intention to ask for an explanation with respect to the employment of Indian troops, and they renewed the shouting when Mr. Holms and Mr. Laing gave similar notices.

What Lord Beaconsfield might call the *diapason* of Conservatism was reserved till, a little later, the subject came before the House on a motion for adjournment. The Marquis of Hartington, who, in his capacity of leader of the Opposition, put a question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was listened to with that respectful attention which Conservatives reserve exclusively for the benefit of a man who, though he has the perversity to be a Liberal, has the good fortune to be a marquis. But as soon as Mr. Fawcett presented himself with an inevitable motion for adjournment, the Conservatives "went for him" in a body. This, however, had no effect on Mr. Fawcett. On the whole, I rather think he likes to be howled at. It encourages, refreshes, and exhilarates him, and he never looks so perfectly content as when standing in the House of Commons smiling in the direction of the persistent uproar which would silence his uncompromising speech. The attempt always fails, and hon. members opposite know when they start that it will fail. Still they shout and groan, and in occasional inarticulate forms find utterance for the enunciation of the greatest of all Conservative principles—that a man who does not agree with you must incontinently be put down. Mr. Fawcett's question showed, amid the intervals of the shouting, how the Ministry of Lord Beaconsfield had introduced into the conduct of British affairs a new and dangerous precedent. He made a very telling speech, the points of which Sir William Harcourt, with unabashed self-complacency, repeated almost one by one when a little later he, with lofty mien, joined in the fray.

But, meanwhile, there was Sir George Campbell. Now Sir George Campbell is a man whom the House of Commons will not have on any terms. There is only one man, and he also is a member for a Scotch constituency, who has less chance of being silently heard on a question of Imperial importance. Yet it is admitted that while Mr. Edward Jenkins sometimes lectures the House without sufficient authority, Sir George Campbell, who came from India

with the reputation of high administrative ability, knows more about Indian topics than any other member—more even, though it is shocking to say so, than Lord George Hamilton. But, as Mr. McLaren has delicately hinted in a correspondence published in an Edinburgh newspaper, Sir George Campbell is handicapped with an insupportable voice. Moreover, he makes long speeches; and, above all, he speaks too frequently. So, last night, when he presented himself, even though he attempted to disarm opposition by announcing his intention of speaking solely as "an old Indian," there was a prolonged outburst of execration which would have daunted anyone but an ex-Governor of Bengal. Sir George, however, like Mr. Fawcett, is used to this sort of thing, and took no notice of it. But the more the great Conservative party howled, the higher and shriller became Sir George's terrible voice. In imitation of Mr. Gladstone and of some other great orators, the hon. baronet had provided himself with something that looked like a pomatum pot, and which contained a liquid guaranteed to strengthen the voice and qualify it for a long oration. He had judiciously secreted this bottle when he took his seat. But, of course, it had to be manifested at some time, and when it was produced, and Sir George was discovered with his head well held back, absorbing the mixture, a howl went up to the glass roof of Westminster, the echo of which must have frightened the sparrows on the eaves outside. Having once dared all by disclosing this suggestive bottle, Sir George made no further secret of the matter, and helped himself whenever he found his voice failing him in the unequal conflict. Presently, in returning the bottle to the insecurity of the ledge before him, it audibly upset, whereupon the supporters of Her Majesty's Ministers cheered as if they had achieved a great political victory.

But everything comes to an end—even a speech from Sir George Campbell—and Sir William Harcourt, as already mentioned, repeated the arguments of Mr. Fawcett. The Chancellor of the Exchequer acknowledged the really serious position of affairs by explaining over again how it was he had on the eve of the recess been enabled to say that all was well, when on the following day came like a thunderclap the news of this trumpet-call to the indefinite hosts of India. It was a very lame apology, but it sufficed for politicians of the calibre of Sir William Edmonstone, who would defiantly cheer one of Her Majesty's Ministers if he held up Mr. Monk's new and prematurely donned white hat, and protested that it was black. Mr. Fawcett's motion for the adjournment was withdrawn on the understanding that the whole matter will be debated when the supplementary estimate to cover the cost of the expedition from India comes before the House; and then a very small remnant of honourable members resolved themselves into a Committee of Supply, spending the rest of the evening in discussing the question of the salaries of officials in the Houses of Parliament.

This discussion took all the interest out of the question which had been put down upon the paper for to-night; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had nothing to do but to repeat in fuller detail what he had said on the previous night. A new incident was furnished by a notice of motion given by Mr. Chamberlain, which is nothing less than a vote of censure on the Government. That notice is to the following effect:—

That the House, sharing the earnest desire expressed in the circular despatch of the Marquis of Salisbury for the good government, peace, and freedom of a population to which those blessings have been strange, condemns the policy of warlike demonstrations which Her Majesty's Government has pursued, and is of opinion that the objects in question and an honourable and peaceful settlement of the existing difficulties will be best promoted by a European Congress, and by a frank definition of the changes in the Treaty of San Stefano which Her Majesty's Government consider to be necessary for the general good of Europe and the interest of England.

The Ministerialists were very hilarious at this fresh demonstration, and the Opposition generally looked glum. They had already had some experience of well-meaning and even desirable motions being brought forward on the responsibility of private members with the result of giving a fresh blow to the Opposition. The importance of the present movement is, however, minimised by the conviction that there is very little chance of Mr. Chamberlain finding a day.

After this the House proceeded to its regular business, which vanished in a singular manner; of the thirteen notices of motion on the paper only two being moved. The orders of the day were thus reached at an early hour, and whilst the important subject of the means of electing bishops was being discussed, a second attempt at counting out the House proved successful, and hon. members went home with the consciousness that for all practical purposes they need not that night have left their homes.

Anniversary Meetings.

THE BAPTIST ANNUAL MEETINGS.

(From our own Correspondent.)

On Tuesday evening the meeting of the Home and Irish Mission was held in Bloomsbury Chapel under the presidency of Mr. George Hare Leonard, of Bristol. The attendance was rather better than usual, though it was far from what it ought to be. Perhaps one explanation is to be found in the fact that the lengthened meetings in the previous part of the day had exhausted the receptive power of hearers. There is little time given during the May Meetings for the digestion and assimilation of intellectual and spiritual food. It is all cram then, and there can be no surprise if surfeit sometimes supervenes. The Rev. Charles Williams brought out very interesting statistics in his useful speech. After expressing thankfulness for the work which the Methodists of every persuasion had done in this country, he said:—

The Wesleyan reports tell me that during the last twenty years their progress has been at this rate:—In 1857 their members numbered 263,835, last year they numbered 372,938, being an increase of 40 per cent. in twenty years. How about the Baptists? Twenty years ago the members amongst the Baptists were reported at 86,407; last year they numbered 269,800, that is to say within the last twenty years the Baptists have increased 200 per cent. And yet, to listen to some brethren you would imagine we ought to be more like the Wesleyans and follow their example of progress. We have no need to do that. All that is requisite is that we should be faithful to our own principles and do our own work, and then we need not go elsewhere for an example among religious bodies. But whilst this progress is unquestionable, we are only at the threshold of the evangelistic enterprise. England is to a large extent still waiting to be converted unto Christ.

And again:—

I do not forget that Mr. Forster, at Bradford, a little time ago reminded that the State placed an educated gentleman in every parish, whom he supposed to be an agent of civilisation. I cannot tell the extent to which they civilise, but I know this, that they do not accomplish much in Christianising the population. One of the agents of the Agricultural Union reports respecting Worcestershire, that three-fourths of the people attend no place of worship, and the consequence is they are spiritually dead. As a rule, they treat the parson with the greatest disrespect; and there is less dissent in the county than anywhere in England, the consequence being that the people, as a rule, are very poor, drunken, and ignorant, with no independence.

The Rev. J. W. Lance, of Newport, delivered a very able and effective speech, full of good points well put. Altogether, the speaking at this annual meeting was far above the general run. Mr. Millard's new and onerous secretariat has begun well, and I believe that he will be the means of giving the Home and Irish Mission a more compact and vigorous organisation than it has hitherto possessed.

Wednesday morning opened with a novelty in the shape of a breakfast on behalf of the African Mission. This first experiment was a decided success. The great hall in Cannon-street Hotel was crowded with guests, a large proportion being ladies. The after meeting was held in the pillar-room, which was, however, far too small to receive the company. It would be well, if this breakfast is to be kept up, that a better arrangement should be made in future. Mr. Joseph Tritton, the treasurer of the Foreign Mission, was in the chair, and was supported by the secretaries and by Dr. Mullens, Mr. McArthur, M.P., Dr. Underhill, Mr. G. F. Muntz, Mr. E. Rawlings, Mr. John McGregor (Rob Roy), and that veteran of African missionaries, Rev. A. Saker. Dr. Moffat had promised to attend, but owing to some family matters he could not be present. On the wall were two large maps of Central Africa, intended to illustrate an admirable paper read by Mr. Baynes, one of the secretaries. Mr. Tritton said that Mr. Baynes had "Africa on the brain." It certainly seemed like it from his mastery of his subject, and the intense earnestness with which he advocated this new mission into the interior of that continent. I trust he will continue to have "Africa on the brain," and that he may be able to infect a few others with the same noble enthusiasm. As he expounded the plans of the Baptist Foreign Mission Committee with reference to Africa, and mentioned the purposes of other mission societies, I was struck with the fact that the agreement entered into to map out Africa, so as to compass the whole land without interfering with each other's district, is a new and Christianlike course. How much labour has been thrown away by kindred Christian societies going into districts already occupied, and how much jealousy and bitterness have been excited by such unworthy modes of procedure! It will be a bright and blessed era in foreign mission work when there is entire abstention from trespassing on each other's territory and generous co-operation to carry the Gospel to regions unoccupied. The speeches at this meeting, with the exception of Mr. Saker's, were, to speak plainly, only moderately interesting. Mr. McArthur was vigorous; Mr. McGregor gossiping. The speeches were practical in the sense of money-producing, and perhaps that was the intention in having a meeting among the business men of "the City." Mr. Saker's address was

that of an able, experienced man—one who has borne the burden and heat of the day in Africa. It was a grand deliverance, and worth all the trouble connected with the breakfast. These breakfasts are after all capital institutions, for they give variety, as well as healthy exercise to social feelings.

The public meeting in Exeter Hall on behalf of the mission was well attended, but as you may have a report of that I will not say more than that it was a fairly average one in point of the interest and effect of the speaking. Mr. Kilner, one of the secretaries of the Wesleyan Foreign Mission, evinced great skill and readiness in what was evidently an off-hand effort, and Dr. Manning, of the Religious Tract Society, whose speech was also impromptu, was no less happy. His readiness and adaptiveness are admirable. In the greatest of emergencies he is never at a loss.

On Thursday morning the second sitting of the Baptist Union was held in Walworth-road Chapel, under the presidency of the Rev. Hugh Stowell Brown. The first half-hour was given to singing and prayer. When the business commenced there were among the large company Drs. Angus, Thomas, Stock, the Revs. C. H. Spurgeon, J. T. Brown, Geo. Gould, F. Trestrail, C. M. Birrell, R. H. Marten, B.A., D. Jones, B.A., J. Aldis, Evan Edwards, J. M. Stephens, B.A., C. Williams, J. W. Lance, Mr. H. M. Bompas, Q.C., Mr. S. A. Pattison, Mr. W. R. Rickett, Mr. Warmington, &c., &c. Dr. Underhill moved, and the Rev. Geo. Gould seconded, a resolution in disapproval of the policy of the Government on the Eastern Question. As the resolution is a long one, and you may have it elsewhere, I need not give it. When Dr. Underhill was speaking in support of his motion, a well-known objecting voice was heard, and had it not been for the firmness of the chairman, and the feeling of the meeting, this persistent gentleman would have shouted Dr. Underhill down. Then came an amendment in favour of "the previous question," followed by a pious speech that the Baptist Union had more important work to do than to express an opinion in favour of peace. If I remember rightly some such argument as this was used at a meeting of the Congregational body in London a few weeks ago. The advocates of the war policy must be hard up to use such a hollow cry as this. Perhaps they dare not appear in their true colours as favouring the provocative policy of the Beaconsfield Ministry, and so they put on an air of holy horror at the idea of a company of Christian men deprecating those acts by which England is being dragged into war. Happily the members of the Baptist Union are far too clear sighted and firm in adhesion to truth and right to be misled by political charlatanism such as is now being practised in England. Dr. Underhill's proposition was carried with only three dissentients. A paper was then read by the Rev. John Aldis, on "The best method of calling forth and cultivating local evangelists in our Churches," which was instructive, suggestive, and beautiful. Mr. Aldis said that there are 3,381 local preachers in connection with the denomination—not double the number of pastors. This seems to me lamentably small, and leaves abundant room for more. Some facts connected with the distribution of this small number may be instructive. The churches in Ireland bear away the palm, having one evangelist for every fifty members. England comes next with one in sixty-four; wary and educated Scotland lags behind with only one in 170; while Wales, that hobbed of eloquence and nursery of preachers, has only one in 254. The Rev. J. R. Wood of Holloway, followed Mr. Aldis with a paper on "The best means of using unpaid local Evangelists." The two papers were supplementary of one another, and each was most valuable. A discussion on the subject was introduced by Revs. H. Dowson, late of Manchester, and G. W. Humphreys, B.A., of Wellington. Judging by the numbers who spoke, and the really capital suggestions thrown out by most of the speakers, it seemed that this subject had long occupied a place in the thoughts of the delegates, and was ripe for consideration. It is to be hoped that the Baptists local preachers will be greatly increased in numbers, that they will be raised to a higher standard in point of intelligence and preaching power, and that the churches will afford them more generous help and encouragement. Mr. Archibald Brown deviated from the lines of the papers by urging that some dozen or so of the ablest ministers in the denomination should give themselves up for a month to do evangelistic work in various parts of the country. It was a capital idea, and I trust that it will be carried out by the committee of the Union, to whom it was remitted for consideration. One gentleman promised that he would be one of twelve to meet expenses, and another offered 25*l.* towards the needed funds. One thing gave me great satisfaction, and that was that there was a general protest against the noisy, reprehensible sensationalism which has so widely prevailed. Mr. Brown said that in the East-end of London these men had done an immense amount of harm. Not only in the East of London but all over the country has mischief been wrought by those who are coarsely blatant as to their ante-Christian degradation. Mr. John Templeton, Mr. Spurgeon, and Mr. H. M. Bompas, Q.C., spoke in support of Mr. Brown's suggestion. The remainder of the sitting was taken up with a vote of thanks to Mr. Gladstone for the part he has taken on the Eastern Question, and with adopting an address to the India Office on the opium trade. The ministers and delegates afterwards dined, at the invitation of

the London Baptist Association, in a large room at the Tabernacle, when, Mr. Spurgeon having to speak, he said, "There were no parties amongst the Baptists. He was an Arminian Calvinist himself; but they all—Welsh, Scotch, Yorkshire—were set on preaching evangelical doctrine. No body of men loved the Gospel more or preached it better."

BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The annual meeting of the Missionary Society was held at Exeter Hall on Wednesday evening, May 1. There was a large attendance. Mr. J. Gurney Barclay presided, and on the platform we observed the Revs. Dr. Landels, Dr. Manning, Dr. Angus, J. C. Page, C. Stanford, Dr. Underhill, Sir Morton Peto, Hon. Justice Lush, &c.

The proceedings commenced with singing, and prayer was offered by the Rev. Geo. Gould, of Norwich.

The CHAIRMAN said he felt it an honour and a privilege to preside at that meeting, and to be associated with that society and with a body of Christians to whom the Protestant Churches of this country owed so much. He could not but feel that they owed to the Baptists very much of the civil and religious liberty they enjoyed, and that a very large proportion of the beneficial influence of Great Britain might be traced to that body. He believed that their Missionary Society was the first in the field. Looking back at the earlier ages of Christianity, they found that the Church which gathered at Jerusalem after the Lord's ascension went forth and preached everywhere. The mighty Apostle St. Paul established churches and appointed pastors. By degrees the Christian Church became a State Church under Constantine, and a time of deadness ensued, when missionary effort almost ceased. Coming to the Church of Rome they found that even in the middle ages the missionary spirit was alive, and the Jesuit fathers—many of them fired with religious zeal—went out and settled in the West Indies and other foreign parts. Traces of their influence were still to be found, although clouded by the idolatry of Rome. When the great Reformation began missionary zeal revived, and from thence had arisen the important societies now existing. All the Churches had now their missionary societies more or less developed, and they all seemed to be flourishing. But they must look not to the human agency but to the Divine power. They might send out their missionaries to all parts of the world, but unless they were inspired by the Holy Spirit of God their work would be very poorly done. It behoved them to show a vital interest in that work, and to do all that lay in their power, both in the selection of their mission agents and in imploring God to bless them and their work. Although the labours of all their missionary societies was but as a drop in the vast ocean, it was all tending, with God's blessing, to hasten the day when the knowledge of the Lord should cover the earth as the waters covered the sea. (Cheers.)

The Rev. C. BAILHACHE, one of the secretaries, read the report, which commenced by taking a brief review of the year's operations. It was stated that the work in France was decidedly progressing, favourable reports having been received from Morlaix, in Brittany, from Tremel, and from St. Brieux. In Italy the mission was advancing at a rapid rate. Testimony was borne to its success by the deputation sent out by the Evangelical Alliance, and more recently Dr. Landels and Dr. Underhill, with others, had gone over the ground, and their evidence was of a hopeful character. There was need they should help their brethren in Italy to occupy the posts of service which were rapidly presenting themselves. The obligation to self-help was recognised by the committee at home, and by Mr. Wall and his coadjutors in the field. It was confidently believed that the regeneration of Italy had begun. In Norway the mission cause had been aided by persecution. An obsolete law has been invoked against Mr. Hubert, of Bergen, for baptizing a young Christian girl under age (she is nineteen), and he was heavily fined. He appealed, first to the preliminary court, and then to the supreme court. The decisions were against him, and the Norwegian Press had inadvertently made it known who were the heretics and what they believed. There was no particular news from the West Indies. The churches in Jamaica have been prosperous on the whole, and the most important of the vacancies in the pastorate of the churches have been filled. From the Cameroons we hear more reports of persecution, and some backsliding as the result; nevertheless, there was progress, under the circumstances all the more gratifying and hopeful. The most interesting and momentous event of the last few months had been the step taken towards establishing a mission in the Congo country. Messrs. Grenfell and Comber, with some native helpers from the Cameroons, were actively engaged in preliminary explorations; and the work of different denominations in the vast and recently-discovered regions of Africa was full of promise. In China, the year just closed would be long remembered as one of famine and suffering. First in Ching-Chow-Foo, and then in the districts where the famine is now over, hundreds of persons were eagerly inquiring about that religion which was so tender and helpful to bodily suffering and social distress. Mr. Richard specially had been one of the most trusted and active administrators of temporal relief, and was still dispensing help in districts where the famine had attained the most awful proportions. The report then refers to India, the field

of the society's brightest hopes. In Calcutta the work of the year has been patiently pursued. In Howrah Mr. Morgan had been distressed by several cases of backsliding, and by practical mistakes under erroneous views of what is called the "higher life." In the South Colinga church, Goolzar Shah reports increase in numbers and growth in spirituality. At Serampore the work in the college and in the native school had been much hindered by prevailing sickness and other unavoidable drawbacks. In Jessore there was a growing spirit of liberality in the native Christian community. There have been favourable accounts from Dacca and Barisal. In the latter 120 men and women were added to the churches. In Northern India, at Dinapore, Mr. Greenway reports an unusually good work among the Europeans, especially the soldiery, and at Patna the Mahomedans had recently begun to manifest friendly feelings towards Christianity, which was more marked among the Hindoos, who showed a growing dissatisfaction with their own doctrines, and listened attentively to the preaching in bazaars. The whole neighbourhood of Delhi was promising. Dr. Carey, the medical missionary in that city, was full of thanksgiving on account of the large number of natives who had professed Christ by baptism. At Allahabad Mr. Anderson was exclusively devoted to his vernacular book. In the Madras Presidency the famine had worked for the furtherance of the Gospel. In Ceylon the labours of the year had been encouraging. Generally throughout India there was a widespread, though vague, yearning for light and peace. During no period of the society's history had there been more of religious inquiry, or of anxious, earnest investigation into Christian doctrines, than at present. But even this gave rise to one of their greatest difficulties. Secular education had given the death-blow to the religious ideas of thoughtful persons, but they were now, to a great extent, in a condition of doubt or no belief. This ferment of religious thought in India was one of the most remarkable and momentous signs of the times. As in England, so there, even the daily and secular press busied itself with religious matters, and the educated Hindoos were set thinking, with the risk of misdirection. The movement of the Brahmo-Shamaj, as a protest against the Polytheism of India, had done a good work; but there were signs that it had done its best, and the organ of the movement now boasted that, "by showing a higher ideal of faith and spiritual development, the Brahmo-Shamaj had at once stopped the progress of Christianity." The movement is described by a competent witness as a failure. There were hindrances to the common object by the adverse competition of other missionary agencies, especially the Propagation Society, where their stations existed side by side with those of the Baptist Missionary Society. This was especially felt in the Delhi district, where there is a lack of co-operation in developing the self-dependence of the native churches, although most missionary societies were pledging themselves more completely to the principle of native self-support. The revival of energy in the Roman Catholic missions in certain fields of labour had proved another hindrance. In India the famine and distress had been much used as a means of proselytism, and in some cases where discipline was enforced, members of churches threw themselves into the arms of Roman Catholics. The report then proceeds to speak of the native churches. In respect to the numerical increase of membership, the accounts are, on the whole, satisfactory. Nowhere, indeed, were the accessions specially numerous, but also nowhere was there any serious falling off, and a quotation is given from the Blue Book on Indian progress, which shows that in 1872 the communicants in the native churches in India were 78,494, and that the converts, young and old, were 318,363. As to the spiritual growth of the native churches, it was pretty much what might be expected. Judged by the heathen standard, the morality of the native churches was undeniably high, and might bear fair comparison with our own. As a rule, too, there is an unswerving attachment to simple evangelical truth, obedience, and manifest spiritual joy. The development of the principle of self-support, though slow, was advancing. Its growth would be more rapid when all the missionary societies shall have acknowledged its importance and set it in operation. The work of Bible translation is pursued with unfailing activity, and favourable reports had been received from Mr. Carter, of Kandy, and Mr. Rouse and Dr. Wenger, of Calcutta. Reference was also made to the circulation of the Bible, the mission among soldiers at military stations, and the zenana work in India. Amongst the notable events of the year were the return of the Rev. C. B. Lewis and Mrs. Lewis and their family, from the scene of labour in Calcutta with which they have been so long and so honourably identified; the commencement of a mission in Japan, and the death of the Rev. J. Ellis, of Calcutta, one of the most devoted and gifted of the societies' missionaries. The demand for new missionaries, especially as new fields are opening, is greater than ever, and the committee appeal for the help of more labourers in the work of spreading the Gospel among the heathen.

In respect to finances, the report for the year was highly favourable, showing a larger income than during any former period except the Jubilee year. The total receipts for all purposes for the year amount to the large sum of 50,068*l.* 17*s.* 10*d.*, being 7,540*l.* 8*s.* 10*d.* more than the previous year. Of this total, 42,254*l.* 12*s.* had been received on the

general account, 2,535*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.* for the Widows and Orphans' Fund, and 5,278*l.* 9*s.* 4*d.* on account of various special objects. Not only have the receipts on the general account of the year been sufficient to meet the year's expenditure—37,873*l.* 9*s.* 5*d.*—but a balance of 133*l.* 17*s.* 7*d.* remains in hand, reducing the amount of debt brought from last year to 3,600*l.* 17*s.* 4*d.*; and the deficiency of 102*l.* 18*s.* 10*d.* on the Widows and Orphans' Account from last year has this year been turned into a balance in hand to the credit of the fund of 41*l.* 4*s.* 2*d.* One special feature of the year's receipts is the fact that the general contributions from the churches not only equal those of 1877, which were more than 4,000*l.* in excess of 1876, but they exhibit a further increase of 477*l.* 12*s.* 8*d.* The expenditure of the year on the general account of the mission has been 37,873*l.* 9*s.* 5*d.*, a decrease of 457*l.* 9*s.* 5*d.* as compared with the previous year. The financial review of 1876-7 closed with an earnest appeal for yet more generous help, and still further consecration.

The Rev. J. KILNER, one of the secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, moved the first resolution:—

That this meeting expresses devout thankfulness to Almighty God for the liberality shown by the churches during the past year notwithstanding the commercial depression which has been felt throughout the country, and the sore privations endured in some districts, in which, nevertheless, the zeal in the missionary cause has not been diminished. The meeting very devoutly hopes that the liberality of the past may prove but an earnest of the increased liberality of the future. With expanding Missions in all our old fields, and the calls providentially made to us to enter into new ones, particularly in Africa, it is both the duty and the privilege of the churches to devote themselves to their great work more thoroughly than ever before.

He congratulated the meeting on the very satisfactory financial statement they had heard, and said he never felt so much disposed to become a Baptist as on that evening. They quite eclipsed the Wesleyans. (Laughter.) Though he did not envy them, he hoped by God's help the Wesleyans would follow them. (Cheers.) Referring to the interesting features of the report, he said that the Staffordshire collier who gave five pounds towards the Congo Expedition and the London water-cress seller girl, who put by a penny a week towards sending the Gospel to the heathen, were remarkable cases. He once had the pleasure of calling on the greatest preacher since John Wesley—their Spurgeon. (Cheers.) He had often heard of him, and translated his sermons when in the West Indies. In the course of their conversation about missions, Mr. Spurgeon said:—"It is you and we who will do it." That remark showed that they (the Wesleyans) had an interest in the concern. There was one incident in the report pregnant with interest—that of the conscientious brother, who felt it right to deprive himself of something he was fond of, but could do without. In that one sentence they had a typical representation of the whole case. If Christians could only be prevailed upon to make self-sacrifices, there would be no need to ask for contributions, and the world would soon be won for Christ. (Cheers.) If friends would only give them the cost of their tobacco, they could convert Africa! He never touched a drop of alcohol himself, and if they could induce people to do without such things what an effect it would have upon their funds. When he was in the West Indies a gentleman sent him 40*l.* he had saved in wine. He had lately had an opportunity of inspecting three of Her Majesty's ironclads. He felt dazed and astonished at the ingenuity displayed in their construction, and he thought what might they not do with the cost of even one of them in spreading the Gospel. If they had but the interest of that money they could multiply their agencies three times over. The society was going into Africa, where other societies were also at work, and he congratulated the president on presiding over a society which had made up its mind to do something on the Congo river. He would urge them to begin as business men, and to work with the dogged determination to win. As sure as the Master sat upon the Throne, the population on the banks of that river would be evangelised for Christ, and the millions of heathen yonder would bless God and the Baptist Missionary Society for their resolve to send missionaries into that territory. (Cheers.)

The Rev. Dr. MANNING, of the Religious Tract Society, in the absence of the Rev. T. V. Tymms, who was unable to be present, seconded the resolution, asked for their indulgence in case he should be discursive—as Mr. Binney once wrote at the end of a long letter, "Please pardon the length of this letter, as I have not time to be brief." He thought the committee had taken a wise as well as a bold course in deciding to take their part in the conversion of Africa by the line of the Congo river. The society had been constantly in the face of failing funds. Year by year their income had fallen short, and they had to stimulate the churches to greater liberality. Some thought their true policy was retrenchment. He took objection to that view of the case. It seemed to him that anything that tended to stimulate the Church, and to devoting men and means to Christ, was a thing for which they should thank God. Who dared to say that the generosity and self-consecration of the Church had reached high-water mark, or that they had risen to the claims of the Gospel. Other demons had been cast out of the Church, but the devil of avarice, hoarding, and self-indulgence still remained, and that devil only went out with prayer and fasting. The proposal to extend

their sphere of operations was, in his view, a great cause of thankfulness. He did not see that it was possible to retrench their expenditure in any direction. India absorbed about 22,000*l.* of the funds. Should they begin retrenchment with India, the classic land of the mission, the land for which Andrew Fuller lived and toiled and wrote, and where Carey went down unto the dead?—with India which had given some of the noblest heroes to the cause of Christian missions? In the record of the Christian Church no nobler glory roll had ever existed than that connected with the Indian Mission. God had blessed and honoured those men with such a harvest as had not been reaped since the days of the apostles. They could not then begin to retrench in India. Their dear and honoured friend Charles Lewis—(cheers)—who had consecrated his life to India, going there with his weak frame, and with the wisdom of a Chancellor of the Exchequer administering their funds with the noblest results, had come back to England a prematurely old man, after a life of self-denying labour. If they went to him and told him that they must commence retrenchment with India his whole soul would reject it, and he would say, "I must go back myself and die there." In China they had two men who had gone into that vast continent to preach the glad tidings of salvation. Should they recall those men and break up that mission, and then stand before God and say they had done the best they could? The West Indies was the double crown of their missions. He sat for some years on the finance committee of that mission, and when appeals came from thence they had doled out with a grudging hand a miserable contribution, although his reason and his conscience told him they had done right in establishing that mission. Could they reduce expenses in Italy, almost the youngest child of their mission? He could bear personal testimony to the work there, for he was familiar with Italy from the Alps to the Mediterranean, and had had many opportunities of studying its condition. He was not there to affirm the infallibility of either Mr. Wall or of Leo XIII., but he would bear his testimony that in all Italy there was not a more devoted or more successful labourer than their good brother at Rome. The whole of that classic land, and Naples, with its hundreds of thousands of people, was opened up to the Gospel, and they certainly could not economise there. He might pass over the various mission fields they had heard about, and show how impossible it was for them to reduce their expenditure. The West African mission was the child of African liberation, and they were bound to continue that. They were planted upon the coast of Africa, but was it wise for them to advance into that land? The Duke of Wellington once said to Lord Shaftesbury that no line of frontier was good for defence that was not equally good for attack. That was true not only of military but religious matters. Having established themselves upon the Cameroons, God was calling them to go into the interior of that country. There was a deeper degradation on that coast line than in the interior, the trade of man with man having trodden down the population around. The main traffic from our shores to that coast was rum and gunpowder. Such had been their contribution in place of the slave-trade. The enterprise of entering upon Africa by the Congo marked another stage in the history of missions. The great missionary societies had met together and mapped out the country, and God grant that before many years had elapsed they might meet with clasped hands and brotherly love in the centre of that vast continent, to sing the praises of Him who lived and died for them, when Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands to God. (Cheers.)

Mr. BAYNES announced that 450*l.* was received at the breakfast that morning, and that a lady had sent a cheque for 100*l.* for African Mission.

The Rev. JAS. OWEN (Swansea), moved the second resolution as follows:—

That this meeting rejoices in the success which has been granted by God to the labours of our missionaries in most of the stations; for the growing interest manifested by the heathen in Gospel truth, for the increasing circulation of the Scriptures; for the advance of native churches in numbers, spirituality, and self-support; and for all other indications of the progress of Divine truth among the nations.

They met, he said, at an important juncture in the history of their society. Peter hardly knew what line to take when he saw the vision at Joppa, and Paul was hindered by the Spirit of God until at length he came to Troas, and there was nothing before him but the blue water of the Mediterranean and the cry of the Macedonians for help. From the time when the first banner of the missionary found refuge in a British settlement, from the time when Mr. Knibb heard from a pilot in the Channel that the Reform Bill was passed and said slavery was doomed, there had been stages more or less important in the history of missions. New doors of usefulness had been opened to the society in Europe, in India, China, Japan, and Africa. Five years ago that week Livingstone had died in Africa, praying for its welfare, and the door had been opened wide by Henry Stanley. (Cheers.) Now that so many doors had been opened, what was the Christian Church to do in order more effectually to carry out the work. They needed deeper faith in their message and mission. Some said that the romance of Christian missions had passed away, that the charm and novelty had ceased, and that missionary speeches had become little better than platitudes. He would say nothing about the speeches, but there were some things which could

not be told. The old story was as new that night as when told by the angels, new like the Master's love, ever fresh like the flowers of spring. If it was realised as the bread of their souls and the joy of their hearts, greater energy would be infused into the work. And the old Gospel must be preached, and the old doctrines that Paul proclaimed, which were the very bone and marrow of Puritanic theology, and were the power of God unto salvation. The greatest hindrance to the success of the Gospel was to be found not in the castes and idolatries of India but in the weak faith of people at home. They needed more faith in their mission and in their Master. The presence of Christ was associated with faithful carrying out of His mission. They needed to be inspired by Him, and at His Cross the true enthusiasm of humanity was kindled within them. It was a grand thing to raise half-a-million of money for the Indian Famine Fund, and the scale of their liberality in respect to their missions must be raised, and the income of their society increased. That was a matter in which everyone had a part to do that day. What were their contributions in comparison with what John Chamberlain, Charles Lewis, Alfred Saker, and others had given, or in the light of their Saviour, who gave Himself for them. There were young men amongst them whom the Church could claim for service, and why should they not call out their reserves in the name of the King of kings. (Cheers.) The character of the men sent would greatly resemble the character of those who sent them. He had read of a young missionary who landed upon an island, and wrote on the sand Jehovah Jireh. It was the first writing the natives had seen, and afterwards—on something more durable than rock—on the hearts of those savages—he was enabled to write the Gospel message. If Christians had faith in their mission the nations would yet crown their Master King of kings. (Cheers.)

The Rev. J. C. PAGE, late of India, seconded the resolution. They had been listening, he said, to an exposition of their sentiment—the world for Christ, but could they expect anything approaching to the fulfilment of that desire unless they put forth greater efforts for its accomplishment? Christ could never fail, but it was vain to think that missionaries could be so multiplied as to go forth into that one continent of India and do all that was expected of them. In their appeal to the churches they wished to see the embodiment of the truth which is in Christ, the living thing, and Christian men and women going out and seizing all the openings before them. They expected Christian men would go forth into the civil service of India, or into the army, and then, acting as living Christians, they would give a mighty impulse to the message of the preachers of the Gospel. He knew not why that could not be thought of a little more, and that in such a way they could act upon the poor heathen that they should see in them the life which the preacher taught. He had spent forty years in India, and he could testify that earnestness of heart and brain and confession of Christ before the heathen had been shown by many, and that it had lifted the national life to a higher level. Where would they get rulers more earnest in their individual religious life and more devoted than the Lawrences, McLeod, and Sir Wm. Muir. What they wanted was the multiplication of the number of such lives, and they would have an immense influence in the conversion of the heathen.

A hymn was then sung, and the meeting was closed with the benediction.

THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

The seventy-fourth annual meeting of this society was held at Exeter Hall, on Wednesday, under the presidency of Lord Shaftesbury, who was supported by the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, the Bishop of Sydney, Bishop Ryan, Lord Dynevor, Sir Charles Lowther, Canon Fleming, Canon Pratt, the Archdeacon of Llandaff, Archdeacon Hunter, the Dean of Ripon, Dean Bagot, Dr. Raleigh, Dr. Jobson, the Rev. W. Arthur, the Rev. W. Braden, the Rev. J. H. Wilson, &c. The Rev. S. Berne having opened the proceedings by reading the 46th Psalm, and by offering prayer.

The Rev. C. JACKSON read an abstract of the annual report, which gave an interesting narrative of the operations of the society at home and abroad. Allusion was made to the hindrance of the work in France by the alteration of the law with regard to colportage, and other causes. M. Monod, however, believed that better times were coming. He had divided the whole of France into six districts, in which there were now sixty-one depots for the sale of the Scriptures, and fifty-nine colporteurs. Arrangements had been made in connection with the Paris Exhibition, by which visitors would be able to see the Scriptures in 146 languages, and to purchase the Word of God in their own tongue. The copies sold by colportage, and at the depots during the past year, amounted to 93,000. In Germany the society's agent, the Rev. J. P. Davies, stated that there was much to depress, and but little to cheer, and a deep-seated conviction that some great change must take place if the nation was to escape from impending trouble. The Scriptures were the only balm for the bleeding wounds of a distracted land. The issues of the agency showed a total of 448,000 copies, being an increase on the previous year of 23,000. Seventy-four colporteurs had been employed during the year, of whom sixty-seven still remain in the service of the society. Five occupied the provinces of

Alsace and Lorraine, where the hindrances to their work were very great, the priests endeavouring to identify it with the subjugation of the country to the German rule. The work in Austria was one of peculiar interest, since from that centre to a large extent God's truth had been diffused among thousands of soldiers who otherwise would have been strangers to it. There had been a circulation amongst the military of 160,000 copies, of which 104,000 were given to the sick, wounded, and prisoners. The work had been a very costly one, but the committee had no hesitation in incurring the responsibility. The Scriptures were everywhere received with gratitude, and some of the soldiers purchased copies to send home to their wives. The total issues of Mr. Millard had been 273,000 copies, of which 233,000 copies had been circulated within the agency. The opposition to the colporteurs was very great, especially in Bohemia, where, notwithstanding professions of religious freedom, the law had so fenced about liberty of action that the Word of God was still bound. In Italy 50,000 copies had been circulated. In Rome there were thirteen churches and halls in which the Gospel was preached, and from that centre, as well as from Genoa, Leghorn, and Naples, the light had irradiated and the warmth penetrated many hearts. Corsica, Sardinia, and Sicily had been visited, while North Africa had received its usual share of attention. In Spain much good seed had been sown during the past ten years, nearly a million copies of the Word of God having been scattered throughout the country. Twenty-two colporteurs had been employed during the year, of whom sixteen still remained in the service of the society. A folio Bible, with marginal references, had just left the press, which, it was believed, would meet with a ready sale. One hundred and twenty Spaniards in different parts of the country had joined the prayer union, and were daily pleading with God for help. In North Russia the issues had amounted to 452,000 copies, and in South Russia to 99,000 copies, of which 43,000 were given to the sick and wounded. The society's work had been prosecuted in Turkey. The Moslem faith was antagonistic to Christ, and the Moslem yoke was one of cruel bondage; none, therefore, could regret that the one should decay and the other be broken. Nevertheless, Christianity had existed only in name in European Turkey; and corruption and intolerance were not peculiar to Turkish supremacy. Little would be gained to the cause of Christ unless religious liberty was allowed to unfurl its banner, and the standard of the Cross was planted in the midst of nationalities long degraded by oppression and polluted with vice. Thirty-two thousand copies of the Scriptures had been circulated in European Turkey, Greece, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and the Ionian Islands. Reports had been received from the Indian auxiliaries which proved that there was no abatement of zeal on the part of those who conducted their operations. The Calcutta distribution of Scriptures to Government-aided schools was being continued, and thirty-three colporteurs had been employed, who had sold 25,000 copies; while in Allahabad, Lahore, Bombay, and Madras efficient work was being done. Allusion was then made to home work, and attention was called to the death of various friends of the society, and the resignation of the late accountant, Mr. Hitchin, who had served the society forty years, and to whom an annuity of 300*l.* had been granted. A brief account was then given of the financial position of the society. The free income of the society for the year ending 30th March, 1878, has amounted to 107,386*l.* 11*s.* 6*d.*; whilst the sum received for Scriptures sold, both at home and abroad, has reached 104,141*l.* 16*s.* 7*d.*, which, with 135*l.* received on account of a special fund for Indian colportage, and 640*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*, for work at the Paris Exhibition, makes a total of 212,303*l.* 15*s.* 7*d.* The expenditure has amounted to 227,865*l.* 18*s.* 1*d.*, being 10,475*l.* 5*s.* more than in any previous year. The increase is wholly due to the extensive and costly effort made in connection with the recent war in the East of Europe. The issues of the society for the year are as follows:—From the depot at home, 1,452,609; from depots abroad, 1,490,988—total, 2,943,597 copies of Bibles, Testaments, and portions. The total issues of the society from its commencement now amount to 82,047,062 copies.

The Bishop of GLOUCESTER and BRISTOL (who took the place of Bishop Ryan) moved the adoption of the report. He commented upon some of its most encouraging statements, and said that the Bible Society was not only a great agency for disseminating the Word of God, but for rallying around it all that loved that Word in sincerity. They had foes to contend with; infidelity on the one hand, and superstition on the other. Though infidelity was increasing silently around them, he saw a tendency to division in its camp. There had been within the last few months striking and wonderful protests from persons who had very little sympathy with them and their cause, against the morbid progress which a falsely-called science has been of late attempting to make. (Applause.) He thought they should be watchful against periodical literature, lest the minds of the young should be adulterated. But he had much more fear at the present time of those who, while allowing God's Word to be good, taught that it could only be properly read under priestly guidance—that there must be an intermediate human agency. He hoped all of them would protest against that. Their reply was—first, that the simple Word of God had worked unaided miracles upon the human heart; and, second, that of per-

sonal experience, which showed that there was a power in the Scriptures that spoke to their hearts as really and certainly as anything in this world. No earnest person in that assembly but would acknowledge the truth of the statement that they could hardly ever reverently take God's holy Word in their hands, even the most familiar portions of it, without some new light seeming to break upon them, some combination of events unmarked before, some rays from the blessed beyond streaming from the page; and many of them must have closed that Book, and knelt down, and thanked God for His unspeakable goodness. Let them then be of good cheer, look hopefully forward, rejoice in their present prosperity, and prepare and arm themselves against their foes. (Cheers.)

Mr. H. FOWLER, of Wolverhampton (Wesleyan), in seconding the motion, said he was an exceedingly feeble representative of one section of English Nonconformity which had never faltered in its allegiance to the British and Foreign Bible Society. (Applause.) And if there were any work which could rebuke and silence their sectarian warfare, it was the work to whose recent history they have just been listening in the admirable, instructive, and eloquent report. Their cardinal principle was that in all questions of faith and morals, at home and abroad, inside the Church in all its sections, outside the Church in all stages and developments of human society, the Bible, and the Bible alone, was the supreme, peerless, and final authority. (Applause.) That was their character and their watchword. This society was ready to fight, pledged to fight, determined to fight, not for any specific dogma, or doctrine, or creed—not to uphold or to destroy any ecclesiastical organisation, but for the Book as the Book, what the Book professed to be, the sole, sufficient, and complete revelation of the will of God to man. (Applause.) The marvellous developments of religious activity; the unceasing increase of religious agency; the loftier, truer, purer tone of their intellectual, social, and public life; the grand expansion and work of the venerable Church of England and her Nonconforming daughters; the statistics which that hall that month would furnish, and which could neither be sneered away nor explained away—(applause)—and, above all, the quiet, steady, daily development of increased personal belief in, of increased personal attachment to, and personal following of, their blessed Lord; all these proclaimed the strength and the extent of that allegiance to the Bible, which was the brightest feature of the present day. (Applause.) The grossest forms of infidelity had been hopelessly defeated, but there was a subtle, conciliatory, respectful, inquiring, polished, but most deadly scepticism, which now, with great plausibility, openly attacked or stealthily undermined the great principle of Biblical authority and Biblical supremacy. There could be no compromise in this controversy. The Bible was a speaking, acting statute-book, as binding in faith and morals in London as it ever was in Jerusalem—(applause)—legislating daily for their individual and national life, and justifying its claims to that legislation by the accumulated proofs of past and present history, and there could be no successful, no beautiful individual or national life in permanent defiance of its precepts. (Applause.) Let them then nail their colours to the mast. In all the spheres where their voice or their influence was effective, let them stand to this position; let it dominate all other controversies. (Cheers.)

The Rev. D. McEWAN supported the resolution.

The Rev. C. HERBER EVANS, of Carnarvon, moved the second resolution, urging increased efforts to promote a wide diffusion of the Scriptures, especially in connection with the Paris Exhibition. None, he said, owed a greater debt of gratitude to that society than the Welsh, and his country furnished the most effective reply to that oft-repeated objection to that work—that it was dangerous to distribute this Book among the uneducated, the illiterate, and the poor. The experiment of distributing the Bible among all classes had been tried for years in Wales, and the result of it was seen in the present action of the Home Secretary, who was about to abolish half the county prisons in Wales. When at Dolgelly, the other day, a friend told me, "You are in want of a theological college at Bala. Buy the new prison in this town; the Home Secretary is about closing it, because it has for a long time been completely empty." And another prison—the Anglesea prison at Beaumaris—had only had one prisoner for six months, and that one could not speak a word of Welsh. (Laughter.) So that now they had a choice of (prisons to be turned into colleges, and to fill them with students was more creditable than to fill them with prisoners. (Cheers.) They owed it all to the influence of this Book. Wales was pre-eminently the land of one Book. (Applause.) They owed it to the influence of the Bible that they had not a single infidel book in their language, and that Popery had failed hitherto to make any progress among the pure Welsh, because they read and know their Bibles too well. Shall we be foolish enough to act like the sloth spoken of by Bulwer, which, having eaten up the last green leaf upon the tree upon which it had established itself, ended by tumbling down from the top and dying by inanition? (Cheers.)

The Rev. GEORGE PALMER DAVIES, B.A., of Berlin, the society's principal agent in Germany, seconded the resolution. He had every year to provide for the printing of some 400,000 copies of the Scriptures for binding them, and for distributing them. But that day he had not to work but to speak. In the Middle Ages, in the great struggle of

civil freedom against ecclesiastical usurpation, Germany defied the Gregories, the Innocents, the Bonifaces, and the Leos of Papal Rome; and in this nineteenth century, in the same great struggle, under its Protestant Emperor and his mighty Chancellor, it has defied, and successfully defied, anathemas of Pius IX., resembling those which were hurled 300 years ago. But, Germany was the land of Luther and of Luther's Bible, and gave England herself her first edition of the printed Scriptures. It was the land whose literature and philosophy were in our own day, for good or for evil, influencing, almost moulding, the philosophical and theological thought of the modern world. But, among the nations of Europe, including our own, it was the land where the plague has spread, the land in which social democratic atheism had first come to be heard, and at this moment it was the axis around which the orb of international Continental politics revolved. He therefore called upon British Christians to help German Christians to rescue their country from the atheistic clutches of its socialists, from the less coarse but equally pernicious infidelity of its materialistic philosophers, and from the dark bondage of its Romish priests. By doing so they would have helped to reconquer for Christ not one-seventh of the population of Continental Europe, but one-third of its spiritual and intellectual energy. (Applause.) Wherever they might be, on German or Swiss soil, whichever of the multifarious languages spoken in these lands might be the language of the population by which they were surrounded, the British and Foreign Bible Society puts it into their power to place in the hands of the people the record in their own tongue of the wonderful works of God, whether those languages be spoken in some of the valleys of the Alps, or in some of the northern forests and plains, by thousands or tens of thousands, or, as in Germany itself, by tens of millions of people. (Applause.) Such was the harvest; who were the reapers? Twenty-five millions of Protestants constituted the first great section of this harvest-field. What should they say to these? There were thousands of harvesters and reapers engaged in reaping and gathering it in, pastors, true shepherds, men of energy and men of God, worthy in every way of the traditions of their mighty pact. Further, they had free organisations, Bible societies and tract societies, Sunday-schools, workmen's homes, orphan asylums, town missions and rural missions, and dozens of other forms of home mission work. They were working for God, and striving to do their best. But, while that was true, it was also, on the other hand, true that the increase of the population had in Germany fearfully, appallingly, outstripped the increase of Christian effort. Where in Germany herself a hundred years ago there were two ordained ministers in proportion to her population, there was at the present moment only one. In her sister Protestant countries—England and the United States—the proportion was three ordained ministers to one ordained minister in Protestant Germany; and if they added to this the fact that in the latter country evangelistic effort was almost unknown, they would see that work like theirs was necessary, not only for Roman Catholic and Jewish Germany, but also for its Protestant population. German Christians were awakening to a consciousness of the extent of the ground which they have failed to occupy and the new ground now being presented to them for occupation; but for long years to come work like this would be necessary in Protestant Germany, not as a gift to Germany, but as work for that kingdom whose King was Christ, and whose territory was neither England nor Germany, but the wide, wide, world. (Applause.)

On the motion of the Rev. F. F. Goe, M.A., seconded by the Rev. Canon FLEMING, thanks were given to the committee; and on the motion of the Bishop of SYDNEY, seconded by Mr. FORDHAM, a similar compliment was paid to the Earl of Shaftesbury for presiding.

In reply, his lordship remarked that he had had the honour and the profound pleasure of taking the chair at those meetings for twenty-seven successive years, and at the end of those years he felt more delight and deeper honour in the position he held than at the time when the office was first conferred upon him.

The proceedings closed with the benediction.

RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY.

The seventy-ninth anniversary meeting of this society was held at Exeter Hall on Friday, and was presided over by Sir Charles Reed. The meeting was opened with singing, and prayer was offered by the Rev. Dr. Stoughton.

The CHAIRMAN said that in the rough vehicles of public information—the almanacks of the past century—no record was to be found of the origin of their religious societies. But there was a history yet to be written which would declare that amongst the mightiest forces for good in that land had been the social and religious enterprises of the Christian Church. He referred to the unsectarian and catholic character which had been retained not only by the Bible Society from its first day until now, but by the Religious Tract Society, while the missionary movement dating from the same epoch now flowed in several denominational streams. Comparing the society's work to a holy warfare, Sir C. Reed likened its depository in Paternoster-row to a grand arsenal, where weapons of defence and attack were forged for the Christian soldiers. As a member of the committee, the chairman said he must bear witness to the ready adaptation of its machinery to

every fresh demand. One day it is the Arctic Expedition, on the morrow seal and whaling fleets, another time English coffee palaces, to-day the world's fair at Paris. Nor could he stand there as chairman of the London School Board without alluding to Mr. Peek's annual gift of 4,000 of the society's reference Bibles as prizes to those competing at the Board's voluntary Scripture examinations. This year about 100,000 children had gone into this competition. In all the great pioneering enterprises of foreign missions the Tract Society had shared. The Sandwich Islands, discovered but a century ago, were now diplomatically represented at Berlin. Christianity had wrought the change, not without the help of the society. This very week a cargo of banished heathen gods and war clubs is announced for public sale in London. Madagascar is now full of schools and places of Christian worship, and three of the great missionary societies were striving to annex Central Africa to the kingdom of Christ. The hand of the society was in all these enterprises. Nor did they accompany the messengers of peace only, they followed the blood-stained trail of war. As in the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny, the German-French struggle, so now in South-Eastern Europe they were first in the field, and Dr. Craig contrived that every wounded Russian should take some religious book in Russ to his distant home. So, too, the Turkish prisoners were provided with 150,000 good books in Arabic and Armenian. And what work was before them in Roumania, with a population half as large as England's and with its 2,435 secular schools; in Bulgaria, with its 3,000,000 people, but one-tenth of whom could read; among the Servian-speaking 4,000,000, who bought 20,000 of the society's publications last year, while the Servian Government are giving its books as prizes in the Servian schools; in Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia; in Greece, whose schools were now inspected by a truly Christian man. To Hungary they had given 200 publications in five languages. Then, as to Russia, since the liberation of the serfs schools were freely established, and the utmost liberty was given the colporteurs, who sold the "Pilgrim's Progress" and "Peep of Day" by thousands as school prizes. Some Russian nobles have subscribed since the war 1,500*l.* for like distributions. In Poland nearly 200,000 tracts were distributed last year. The total receipts from trade sales for the year and all other sources, were 148,557*l.* Every penny subscribed was employed in evangelistic operations, the circulation of nearly 63,000,000 books and tracts in 120 languages. It was difficult to estimate this enormous number, but he asked his hearers to consider the value of such an incalculable blessing to the human family. They lived in wonderful times. Their work extends year by year. As it advanced funds were more urgently required, and they were bound by every sacred consideration to go forward. What they wanted was not a larger measure of confidence, but larger means for home—but especially for foreign work; and for these he was confident he should not to-night appeal in vain. (Cheers.)

The Rev. Dr. MANNING, one of the secretaries, then gave a summary of the report which stated that during the past year 500 new publications had been issued, of which 201 were tracts. The total circulation from the home depot of books, tracts, and periodicals was upwards of fifty-two millions, of which twenty-four millions were tracts. The issue from foreign depôts was about ten millions, making a total circulation of nearly sixty-three millions, and of nearly one billion seven hundred and eighty-three millions since the formation of the Society. The receipts from all sources, including last year's balance, had been 148,557*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.*; and the expenditure in trade and grant departments 146,231*l.* 18*s.* 1*d.*, leaving a balance of 2,326*l.* 13*s.* 7*d.* The total amounts of subscriptions and other contributions—the whole of which was available for the missionary objects of the society—was 28,083*l.* 14*s.* 9*d.*; but the expenditure had exceeded that amount by 8,182*l.* 10*s.* 4*d.*, which had been supplied from the trade funds. Grants of publications had been made to every branch of home missions to the amount of 19,869*l.* 17*s.*, and the colportage societies in Great Britain had been assisted by large supplies of tracts. Prizes had been presented by the society and Mr. F. Peek to the children in Board schools who had passed the examination, at which 82,000 children attended. In France special preparations have been made for a large distribution of tracts in French and foreign languages at the approaching Great Exhibition, and various societies, pastors, and others, in every part of France, have received grants of tracts, which they find most valuable. In Belgium and Switzerland, the societies at Brussels, Geneva, and Lausanne, have continued to receive liberal aid. In Spain the work has proceeded with but little interruption. A number of new tracts by Spanish authors have been published. In Portugal all has prospered, and the year has been marked by the issue of the first Protestant Almanac. In Italy the depot at Rome has been put on a new footing; valuable tracts and books have been published at Florence; grants of libraries have been made to the Waldensian valleys. Evangelical work has been helped in every part of Germany by grants to societies and individuals. From Hamburg, Baden, Elberfeld, Dresden, Nuremberg, Carlsruhe, Hanover, and other places, colporteurs and active tract distributors carry evangelical publications through the land by the aid of the society's help. In Austria the work of the depot at Vienna has been increased, and a useful distribution carried

on by the Evangelical Union at Linz. A new evangelical depot has been opened at Prague, and many valuable works, both tracts and books, have been published in Bohemia and in Hungary. A large sum had been set apart for extension of work in Roumania and Bulgaria, &c. In Turkey, in spite of the war, publication work has been vigorously carried on. The evangelical societies of Norway, Sweden, and Holland have been helped, and tracts have been freely distributed in the seaports of Denmark. Grants have been made for the garrison at Malta. India, that great mission field, has continued to receive vast help. Tract societies and mission presses in all parts have thankfully acknowledged the value of the Society's aid. Its influence has been felt in every part. In Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, and Bangalore, the Punjab and the North West Provinces, Oude, Tirhoot, and Orissa, the Mysore and Travancore, and Ceylon, the Khassia Hills and Burmah, Christian literature published by the Society's aid is increasingly circulated. In China, the 130 missionaries assembled in conference at Shanghai thankfully acknowledged the value of the work aided by the society in that country. Christian books, tracts, and periodicals are gaining increased influence. From Japan the reports is encouraging; in Persia a translation of the Pilgrim's Progress has been undertaken; in Syria the Arabic Paragraph Bible has been circulated; other valuable works have been published and grants made to schools. In Palestine missionary students have received books for their library. Grants have been made to North and South and East and West Africa; among the Arabs of Tunis and Algiers, in the hospital in Egypt, among the Falaahas of Abyssinia, on the reaches of the Upper Niger, among the inhabitants of Sierra Leone and Rio Pongas, among the Kaffirs and Zulus in Natal and the Transvaal, the influence of the society's grants has been felt. The French missionaries in Basutoland have been largely helped. The missionary presses in Madagascar have again been supplied with paper. A grant of books and tracts has reached St. Helena. Grants have been made to every part of British North America, among the scattered settlers both in Upper and Lower Canada, and the maritime provinces of the Dominion. Libraries granted by the society are eagerly sought after. The lumbermen in the backwoods and the fishermen of Newfoundland have been well supplied. Bible stories are being published for the Eskimo. In Mexico a Religious Tract Society Committee has been established, and the press of Toluca has been again helped. Jamaica has received many grants, as well as Antigua, Dominica, and the Virgin Islands. In South America, Brazil and Chili have been helped, and tracts have been sent to the Falkland Islands. Grants of books and tracts made to societies and individuals in New South Wales and Victoria, the Swan River, and Queensland, in the towns, and in the bush, have aided the efforts locally made. The Missionaries in Tahiti have been helped, and the publication work in Samoa encouraged.

The facts stated in the report show that the sphere of the society's influence continues to widen; and the openings for the extension of its operations to multiply. The committee in conclusion remind their friends that every fact which bears witness to the continued usefulness of the society's work, and to the blessing which rests on the circulation of the truth, is a call to renewed prayerful effort in thankful dependence on Him from whom alone all the blessing has come. The report concludes by saying:—

Those who read these pages will find that they tell of the English clergyman, the minister of one of the most important London churches, thankfully declaring how a tract given on a racecourse changed the current of his life; of another, the head of one of the largest educational establishments for the poor in the same city, acknowledging how the tract, at first rejected, led him in his youth to apprehend the truth as it is in Jesus; of the German baron, whose home has been for years a centre of light in his country, tracing all his zeal for the spread of the truth to the influence of a little book; of the lady who has so long laboured for the elevation of the wives and sisters of the Paris ouvriers, speaking of the little book "Lucilla," which opened her eyes to the errors of the Church of Rome; of the Spanish evangelist, contending for the faith in his own country, led to Christ through the text-card given in a London hospital; of the Parsee missionary, now returned to labour among his own people, whose attention was first aroused by Christian tracts; of the Scripture reader in Oude, led to Christ through a tract purchased on the Lucknow racecourse; of the Orissa convert, brought to the knowledge of the truth by tracts given him by a half-enlightened man in Pooree, the very seat of Satan; of the Chinese farmer far beyond the missionary's reach, led to him and to the knowledge of the truth by the tract bought from the colporteur; of the aged Japanese converted by God's blessing on a simple tract; of the American sailor arrested in his careless course by "The Swearer's Prayer," and now a minister of the Gospel; of the Syrian doctor of Damascus, so earnest in the spread of the faith, led to Christ many years ago by the study of the Arabic translation of "Keith on the Prophecies"; of the young Greek in Thessaly, steadfast in tribulation, whose attention has been aroused by the reading of a child's paper and a Christian tract; of the reader of the "Aryan," thus led to decide to follow Christ, at Mirzapore; of the Karen man reading the tracts secretly left by his pious mother in his house, and now a rejoicing Christian; of the Roman Catholic priest, first led to a more perfect knowledge of the way of the Lord by the tract given him as he descended the steps of his church, and dying a Protestant pastor, highly esteemed for his work's sake; of the young Italian receiving the first impression of the truth from the Italian almanack, and confirmed in it by the tracts received in France; of tract

distributors in France and England, so earnest in their work, remembering the blessing which a tract had once been to their own souls. Such are surely but samples of a vast number of similar cases of which no record has been preserved. Are they not enough to cheer and encourage every producer, every publisher, every distributor of Christian books and tracts, of every one who tries to help on the work?

Mr. JOHN MACGREGOR (Rob Roy), moved a resolution adopting the report and appointing the committee for the ensuing year—not, he said, the attenuated skeleton of the report which Dr. Manning had presented to them, but the good honest whole of it. It was a practical business-like report, consisting of no less than 320 pages, seventy of which were about home, and the rest about foreign operations. It was the seventy-ninth report. The society was old in its principles, but ever new in its ways. During the year it had issued 500 new publications, of which 201 were tracts. What was a tract? He supposed it to be a very short thing, because, having begun to read it, they soon reached the end of it. He read the other day that *tact* was the sixth sense. Some people had got tact, but not the other senses. Now the word tract had got tact in it, and so the tract itself ought always to have that in it. He had been where tracts were born. Of course they originated in some person's brain. But a tract that was got from the Tract Society had to go through a very severe ordeal, being criticised by each member of the committee, and it was often altered in the process, losing, perhaps, some sensationalism, but gaining more strength. It was then—not baptized—but adopted. It had then got to live, and must be encouraged to do so. Its worst enemy was neglect. How long did it live? He knew one that had lived fifty years. The next thing was to distribute the tracts. The agents of that society were very numerous. He was connected with the Open Air Mission, which was one of the numerous bodies that valued the service of the Religious Tract Society. They had received from them about 300,000 tracts, and were very grateful for the aid afforded. Last year there was an inquiry made as to whether some new paper could not come into the world which would do it good, and a number of gentlemen made inquiries into the state of their literature. They found it to be a great deal better than they expected. Such publications as the *Leisure Hour* and *Sunday at Home* had filled a great void. The society had to deal with foreigners as well as their own countrymen. He had given tracts in almost every country in the world. Three hundred books had been issued during the year, and what a good thing it was to have a society like that, which took care that those books were all of the right sort. Then they had the Bibles. He did not himself like the paragraph Bible, although he had carried it about with him for thirty years. It was said that every third baby in the world was a Chinese baby. The Bible Society and the Church Missionary Society were at work in that vast country, and the Tract Society must get its works into that country now that the Chinese were sending their countrymen here to be educated. In one part of Asia the same language was found to be understood by all the people, and the publications of the Tract Society would be wanted by them. They must look forward to the future, while thanking God for the past. (Cheers.)

The Rev. THEODORE MONOD, of Paris, seconded the resolution. Referring to the scenes in Paris at the opening of the Exhibition, he said it was very striking to see the unanimity which prevailed. The whole heart of the people seemed to be in it, and they seemed to rejoice as a family did when a sick mother had been restored to health and life. That was just what they were feeling—after the scenes of foreign and civil war through which they had passed eight years ago. Every attempt had been made to rob the people of the Government of their choice, without success; and now they had a Government peaceful and prosperous. The Prince of Wales had also come, and that showed them that they had the sympathy and respect of other nations. He overheard a little girl prattling away to her mother and saying, "I could not see the President, but I have seen the Republic." She was right, they had seen the Republic. But there was one thing missing in that great festival, and that was the name of God. He was nowhere mentioned. What they who had the knowledge of God and His love had to do was to profit by the grand opportunity now presented to make the name of God known and loved among the people, who were ready to hear the Gospel. To an extraordinary degree they were seeking the Gospel, and it was a mistake to suppose that the people of France were very far gone in opposition to Christianity. Some of them were, and the newspapers were, but the common people were not for the time being, although they might become so, and the responsibility was upon those who had the truth to take it to them. After relating an interesting case of conversion, the speaker referred to Mr. McAll's work in Paris, where he was about to open another mission-hall. In concluding his speech the speaker thanked the society for all it had done, and for all it would do for France.

The resolution was agreed to, and the Rev. NEWMAN HALL addressed the meeting on the value of tract distribution. The value of any work depended upon the work itself, and the value of what was sown upon the crop that was reaped. What was the seed they were sowing in distributing tracts? They went back to the origin of tracts, and remembered that the Bible was a book of tracts, and what wonderful tracts they were that Moses,

David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the rest wrote! And coming to New Testament times, what a little tract was that of Mark, and what precious leaflets were the letters of the Apostles. They did well to remember the value of tracts that year when they commemorated the 500th anniversary of Wycliffe's birth. Those tracts were always reflections of those great original tracts. A tiny drop of dew reflected the glory of the sun, and the casement window of a little cottage or a bit of broken glass was sufficient to reflect the light of the sun, and small as their little tracts might be, they did serve to reflect the brightness of the Sun of Righteousness. Their Creator had a number of tracts and leaflets and big volumes in the natural objects around, in which His power and love were reflected. In all the publications of that society there was the truth about Jesus Christ, and about that fundamental verity upon which their salvation depended. Sometimes they might hear sermons and doubt whether they were delivered in a Christian church or in a Jewish synagogue, because there was no central verity in them. As Andrew Fuller once told a preacher, there was one thing missing in his sermon—Christ, and the preacher replied it was not in his text, but Fuller rejoined, "There is never a lane in the country but leads into the king's highway," and all those tracts led to the King's highway. There was great value in tract distribution, and it was the duty, not only of the minister, but of each member of the royal priesthood, to say every one to his neighbour, Know ye the Lord! Christianity could not flourish in an atmosphere of sloth, and personal service was required from each one. When he was in Italy he was told that the Roman Catholics could not be got to go to church, and that the only hope of Italy lay with the colporteurs. There were multitudes of women who could give a tract, and if given with a persuasive look it might often be of great service. Little children who could do nothing else could give tracts. Valuable results had ensued from the reading of a tract, instances of which the speaker related. A little pebble might slay a Goliath, and a little tract might save a soul from death, and add to the many crowns of Christ. (Cheers.)

A collection was then made.

The Rev. T. P. HUGHES spoke on the Tract Society's work in India. He described a visit to a Mahomedan book-shop in Lahore, where they found the proprietor smoking his pipe, but on their approach he ceased smoking, and spreading his carpet on the ground knelt and went through his prayers before attending to them. All round the shop were volumes of the Koran, and beneath them volumes of tradition describing how the Prophet rode and ate, &c. Then they turned to the works on practical theology, but only found long chapters on the proper way of cleansing the teeth before prayers, of washing of hands, of the Prophet's walking-stick, and similar subjects. They left the shop without having received any light or guidance. They asked the old gentleman whether he had anything spiritual, and he took down a volume and gave them, but the most spiritual chapter was that which enjoined the repetition of the ninety-nine names of God. They turned away disgusted with the whole thing. They thought they might get something to interest them in secular books, but they were all too obscene. As they went out they looked at the newspapers, and they were astonished that the English Government should allow these vernacular newspapers to be published. The vernacular Press of India in no way represented native thought, but were chiefly conducted by renegade Christians, and they were utterly disloyal. It was not so with the native English Press. They went out of that shop and went to another, which stood at the entrance to the city. It was a fine structure, erected by one of the sons of the Bishop of Durham. They went into that shop, and there they saw texts of Scripture all round the shop, many of the publications of the Religious Tract Society, the *Leisure Hour* and *Sunday at Home*, and other publications translated into the vernacular of India. That book-shop was the Tract Society's depot. They wanted yet more Christian books. They had entered upon a new era in missions. Fourteen years ago it was thought that the only way to reach the natives was by public preaching, but they now found that the natives of India were willing to read their books. If anyone had been a missionary in India for fourteen years they would have found out their mistake. If they called upon a Mahomedan, he would look upon them with as much astonishment as Dr. Manning would look upon a Mahomedan who came to talk to him about Mahomedanism. But those men would read a tract, and they had many instances of persons converted through reading of tracts. They also wanted secular books written in a Christian spirit. They were going to have something like the *Leisure Hour*. They wanted a native Press. As missionaries they influenced thought in India, and they wanted to saturate their minds with Christian ideas. Wherever he travelled in India he saw a vast converting influence going on. The only question with them was, Should they give a Christian end and aim to that vast converting influence, and they asked for help to enable them to do so. (Cheers.)

The Rev. Canon FLEMING, D.D., then addressed the meeting on the relation of the Religious Tract Society to the literature of the day. That relationship was mainly friendly. The society stood out like a lighthouse and a beacon to warn all of the rocks and shoals which were making shipwreck of

many around. It stood upon high vantage ground because of the wonderful printing press and the wonderful capacities of the human mind to receive what it brought forth. Elementary education had become so general in this country that the working classes were becoming capable of the highest education. Good instruction was provided for the children, but it was in the after years of every man's life that his education was formed on the instruction he had received. When their sons and daughters left school, the danger came which that society sought to guard against, by sending out a ceaseless stream of tracts and books. As a clergyman he valued the literature of that society. If he went elsewhere, he came back always to feel that that society excelled in books on the Lord's day. There was a great thirst in the present day for books of travel, and he hoped the society would give some attention to that demand. There was a future before them which no man could read, but they would only do their part as they sought to elevate and ennoble the literature of the day, which was silently moulding the character of all around them for good or evil, and making or marring the national life. (Cheers.)

A hymn was then sung, and the meeting closed with the benediction.

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An ADDITIONAL MEETING will be held on the FOLLOWING EVENING, the 14th inst., at the CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL, Allen-street, Kensington, at which the Rev. Dr. RALEIGH will preside, and the following Ministers are expected to speak:—The Revs. W. M. Statham, C. E. B. Reed, M.A. (Assistant Secretary of British and Foreign Bible Society), Dr. Fisch (Paris), and Pastor Dardier (Geneva). To commence at Seven o'clock. Collection at the close.

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LONDON: THURSDAY, MAY 9, 1878.

GRATIS.

THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION MEETINGS.

(From our own Correspondent.)

Although the annual meetings of the Union in London were expected to be unusually lively, they commenced with about as little excitement as was possible. The "business meeting" is, in fact, always rather formal—either because the members have not warmed to their work, or because they reserve themselves for the larger and more exciting questions which usually come up in what is called "the Assembly" on the following days. Monday was no exception to the rule. This year the officials, like the unofficial persons, saved themselves on the opening night; the Rev. J. Baldwin Brown not being well enough to attend, in prospect of the delivery of his address on the following morning, and the Secretary, Mr. Hannay, getting the Rev. J. Robertson, of Harrogate, to read the report, to spare his voice for the missionary sermon on Wednesday. The Rev. J. G. Rogers, as an ex-chairman, was voted to the chair, and at short notice gave an able and vigorous address.

It was, however, preceded by the reading of the report, which, though lengthy, was listened to with evident interest, and the main features of which you will no doubt give below. Probably the most important practical matter referred to in the report was the intended formation of the Congregational Church Aid and Home Missionary Association, to which the county unions and the Home Missionary Society have given in their adhesions, and which is to be launched at the end of the week. The report closed with the usual obituary notices of deceased members—the Rev. Messrs. Herbert, Matheson, Gwyther and Parsons, Henry Rogers, and others—notice written with both judgment and feeling.

Mr. J. G. Rogers then spoke, and with his usual animation. He expressed thankfulness for the unity of the churches and the progress of the Union; eulogising the secretary in connection with the latter. They had, he said, to solve the difficult problem how to combine fidelity to truth with freedom of opinion—a problem which perplexed other churches as well as Congregationalists. He, however, believed that they were not separated in feeling, as some supposed; but would be able to combine their duty to truth with love to one another. A reference to the present time, as one of anxiety, naturally brought the speaker to the Eastern Question; in regard to which he said that there could be no doubt as to the opinion of Nonconformists, who never were more united—a remark which was emphatically cheered, as was the further statement that if the clergy had been as anxious for peace, war would be impossible. At any rate, if the Premier wished to destroy the power of Nonconformists, he had failed; but their power sprang solely from their fidelity to great principles, and to truth and righteousness. The repeal of the Tests Acts, and the measures which had followed, showed what they could accomplish, and they had but to be true to the Evangelical faith, to God, and to each other, and they would find that yet greater things were in store for them.

All that followed was formal, and occupied but a few minutes. The report was adopted with unanimity; there being no disposition to provoke discussion about the Leicester Conference at that stage, and at quite an early hour the business meeting came to a peaceful end.

Variety being charming, I suppose nobody will complain of the frequency with which the Congregational Union changes its chief place of meeting; in fact, some of the members advocate it on the ground of policy. The Weigh House, the Poultry, the City Temple, Westminster Chapel, and now the new Union Chapel, Islington! And I should think the general feeling on Tuesday must have been that it was the very ideal of a building for the purpose—so large, so quiet, so cheerful looking, and so attractive, now that the interior is completely finished. Certainly the assembly has never presented so imposing an appearance, and, I should think, Congregationalists never assembled in such numbers as on Tuesday, for the place was crammed everywhere, and probably all could see and hear also.

The two items in the morning's programme which were looked forward to with the greatest interest

were the address of the chairman and the resolutions and amendment relating to the Leicester Conference, and there was a feeling abroad that the two would have some relation to each other—a feeling which proved to be not ill-founded.

Notwithstanding that Mr. Baldwin Brown had been in indifferent health, he appeared to be—to use a cant phrase—in excellent "form" when he commenced his address, which was delivered throughout with great force, though not altogether without that nervousness which sometimes makes his hearers a little uncomfortable, and probably himself a great deal more so. His style was unusually direct, and was characterised by both pungency and vividness; though at times there was, as regards matter, a tendency to discursiveness which made it doubtful what the topic, or topics, of the address would be. That, however, presently became clear. At the outset Mr. Brown lauded the freedom of Congregationalism, which, because it was free, was flexible and full of vitality. Then he enlarged on the tendency of Nonconformity to make men freedom-loving, independent, and the champions of truth and righteousness; and he brought the audience to their feet by referring to Mr. Gladstone's recognition of the recent services of Nonconformists to the cause of humanity. Next, he admitted that there was room for more culture in connection with this robustness, and Mr. Arnold was reminded that there were others besides Nonconformists who did their work in the world bunglingly and with narrowness. Finally, Nonconformity worked with, as well as for the people, and that made it the largest, freest, and strongest life on earth. Then, referring to impending crises, the speaker passed to his second theme—the assaults of atheism and materialism on Christianity. He recommended theologians to let the scientists alone, and deprecated the "stupid virulence" of some of the attacks made upon them. He had a respectful word for Mill, Harrison, and Renan, wholly as he differed from them, and objected strongly to the anti-humanitarianism of some of the advocates of Christianity, in the attitude which they assumed towards the world, and in offering a theological creed or ecclesiastical system, instead of the Gospel. Some of the passages in this part of the address were very strong, and rather suggestive of exaggeration. Then, coming at last to the question of the hour—as far as Congregationalists are concerned—he asked "How about ourselves?" Well! there might be cause for anxiety, but none for fear. The new Christianity without a divine Christ would, no doubt, cause troubles; but, if they took their stand on mere declarations, they would find them to be but as sands beneath their feet. Then, coming right up to the point at issue, he said plainly that he utterly dissented from the policy which the committee recommended for their adoption. He was in a position of difficulty; but he had not placed himself there, and must deliver his soul. He went on to say that it was unwise to allow action to be forced upon them by any conference outside, and that the Union would consult its own dignity by waiting till the question was raised within. Let them be quiet and go on with their own work; remembering that the only way of showing they were evangelical was by being evangelical. Has it come to this, he asked, that, with all our past history, we must fall back on a distinctly retrograde policy, by adopting the methods of the past? Did they really need such a helpless, slipshod declaration as that presented to them? He was amazed that it should be promulgated, and so far as it arose from the vague feeling that "something must be done," it was perilous. Opposition to the proposed course did not necessarily mean indifference to evangelical truth, and then the speaker closed by an earnest appeal to those who were seeking to "empty the Gospel of Christ" not to murder the hopes of mankind. The Chairman sat down amid long-continued cheers; but it had been interesting to notice the reception accorded to different portions of the address as it appealed to a unanimous, and then to a divided auditory. This is the second year in succession that the chairman of the Union has declared himself in opposition to some of the proposals of the committee, or to the attitude of a portion of the assembly, and it says something for the freedom of the Congregational body that each chairman spoke his own mind fully, and was listened

to with respect, even by those whose concurrence was withheld.

During the greater part of two hours the attention of the audience had been kept up without flagging, and it afforded a momentary relief to sing a hymn before proceeding to the serious, if not exciting, discussion which was evidently about to commence. Making a virtue of a necessity, the secretary moved the suspension of the standing order limiting the time of the speakers, which was carried by a majority; and the assembly also agreed that, if need be, the discussion should be adjourned at a quarter to two, in order that a resolution on the Eastern Question might be proposed; and it was afterwards announced that the meeting would again be held in the Union Chapel, instead of in the Memorial Hall.

Dr. Mellor then moved the resolutions relating to the Leicester Conference agreed to by the committee, and which are too long to be given here. It was easy to see the kind of speech which the doctor had prepared; and equally easy to see that the chairman's address had a subduing, not to say disconcerting, influence on the speaker. He presently fell into his usual oratorical manner, and said some effective things in an effective manner; but beyond saying that he differed from the chairman in his view, his speech contained no answer to the chairman's argument. He had no difficulty in demolishing some of the positions of the promoters of the Leicester Conference; but he had nothing to say in defence of the proposed mode of dealing with them, except that, if the Union thought itself likely to be damaged by their action, it had a right to make the proposed declaration. Dr. Mellor insisted, however, that this was not a question of individual freedom, but of association and fellowship. Much that was said about communion was mere poetry, and after asking the meeting if it believed this and that, and receiving an emphatic response—Yes! or No! from many, he inquired, How could they have communion with those who did not worship the same Being? The closing passage of his speech was full of feeling, and he was loudly cheered on sitting down.

The Rev. CHARLES WILSON, who seconded the motion, addressed himself mainly to the work of showing why the resolutions should be adopted, and spoke without any excitement. He regretted the raising of the question, but it must be met; and said that if it were humiliating to have to make such protestations, it would be more humiliating to shrink from making them. There was a middle course between having a sharply-defined creed and ignoring all differences of belief, and Congregationalism supplied it, and the body had always been essentially evangelical.

At this point it was announced that notice had been received of several amendments—one by Dr. Parker—which had been published—one by the Rev. W. Currie, of Leeds, to the effect that any other declaration than that appearing in the Year Book was uncalled for; another by Mr. Aokland, of a similar purport, and two verbal alterations in the doctrinal points stated in the second resolution, to render them more complete. Dr. Parker then moved his amendment in a speech somewhat less characteristic than usual, but one which evidently impressed a considerable section of the meeting. He was, he said, as attached as anybody to Evangelical truth, and that was why he objected to such a statement of it as was to be found in the shreds and patches of the second resolution, which represented only a part of that truth. Naturally, when a house was on fire, the occupants seized upon the most valuable possessions; but really their house was not on fire! He objected to legislation in a panic, thought they had been too easily alarmed, and that the Leicester Conference had been unduly magnified. The promoters of the conference had made a mistake, but they had been answered on the spot, and enough had been done in the way of protest and denunciation. If the whole machinery of the Union were to be brought to bear upon every half-a-dozen gentlemen who might get up a conference, its work would never come to an end. He ridiculed the idea of settling, in the categorical way adopted by Dr. Mellor, questions which caused many men so much heart-agony, and said that the truth was not to be got at by distinctions of the kind proposed; but while he should have been content with moving the previous

question, he offered the alternative contained in his amendment.

The doctor said he had not provided a seconder, but the Rev. J. W. Aveling, of Northampton, seconded it, in a few words, in which he expressed agreement with the chairman. Then Mr. Picton came forward, and was received with a good many cheers, while he was looked at with evident interest by those who had heard much of, but had not previously seen him. One member of the Union protested against his being heard till this matter had been disposed of, but the chairman said Mr. Picton was a member of the Union, and had a right to be heard, and the meeting emphatically indicated its readiness to hear him. And it heard him with the utmost, and almost pained attention, while he spoke with great self-possession, combined with earnestness and deep feeling. He wished to express his gratitude for the generosity and charity with which the Leicester Conference had been criticised. Its object was not to cast discredit on the doctrines believed by most of the members of the Union, for some of those who took part in it believed in those doctrines. It had been asked, Why did not the extreme left of the body go over from the Congregational Union to the Unitarians, or some other body? He answered because there was no other body with which they had so much sympathy, and with whom they felt so much at home. He had himself been brought up under the blessed influence of evangelical traditions, and gloried in the spiritual life derived from Christ; and it was not without struggle and suffering that he had come to occupy his present position. The rejection of creeds was a principle of Independency, and they should trust to the spirit of freedom which had always animated them. If it were asked, Were there to be no limits? he replied that there were selected spiritual affinities which guided the actions of men—at which there was a slight murmur—and they need not fear that any but those who loved them would adhere to them; and why should they cast off those who loved them? It would be better to trust to the power of truth to overcome what was wrong. After another feeling allusion to his own spiritual history, Mr. Picton said that he and those acting with him were not alone; for there were many in their churches and families who sympathised with them; and if the Union set its seal to these resolutions, though they affirmed what nobody doubted, they would cast a forbidding shadow over the pathway of many struggling souls. He also, towards the close of his speech, expressed regret that the Leicester Conference had been held at the time it was; though there was no evil intention in the arrangement.

The Rev. Eustace Conder expressed his admiration of the manliness and deep feeling displayed by Mr. Picton's speech; which could not have been heard without respect and sympathy—a sentiment to which the meeting warmly responded. But, he added, painful sacrifices must sometimes be made; and though he would have seconded Dr. Parker's proposal, he thought that either that or the committee's resolutions were necessary, inasmuch as Congregationalism was not merely a form of government, but involved certain historical beliefs.

At this point an adjournment of the discussion took place, and a motion deprecating war was proposed and adopted. Under other circumstances that would no doubt have produced some exciting speaking and equally exciting hearing; but the previous proceedings had been so lengthened, and so many persons were suffering from heat and fatigue that, naturally enough, the great meeting now began to separate.

CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES.

The meetings of the Congregational Union commenced on Monday, when the forty-eighth annual meeting was held at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon-street. There was a large attendance of members in the large hall, and the galleries were occupied with visitors.

The Rev. ALEXANDER HANNAY, the secretary, announced that the chairman of the Union, the Rev. J. Baldwin Brown, was unable to be present that evening. He had been for some time past unwell, and thought that attendance that evening would unfit him for the duties of the next day. He therefore proposed that the Rev. J. G. Rogers, should take the chair, which was agreed to. The hymn commencing, "I love Thy kingdom, Lord," was then sung, and prayer was offered by the Rev. G. Gillilan.

The Rev. A. HANNAY said that the question of voting by proxy raised at the last business meeting having been considered by the committee, they had decided that the votes of absent members should not be received in balloting for the officers and committee, and he proposed a resolution to

that effect. The Rev. I. V. MUMMERY seconded the resolution, which was adopted. Messrs. Vardy, Mummery, Ashton, and Nicholls were then appointed scrutineers of the ballot.

THE NEXT CHAIRMAN.

The Rev. A. HANNAY reported that two nominations for the chairmanship of the Union for 1879, were received in due order by the committee. The first in favour of the Rev. Dr. Reynolds, of Chesham College. (Cheers.) To the great regret of the committee, Dr. Reynolds declined the nomination solely on the ground of physical incapacity to perform the duties of chairman. Another nomination in favour of Dr. Legge, of Oxford University, was received, but to their great regret Dr. Legge also declined, on the ground of the pressure of work he had already on hand, which made it impossible for him to undertake any further duties. The time having elapsed for nomination, it fell by rule to the committee themselves to nominate a gentleman to occupy the chair. It was just to the committee and to the gentleman who had been selected, that the process should be described. At a full meeting of the committee, specially summoned, the question was brought up. Each member of the committee was free to nominate whom he would. Those nominations were read from the chair, and a majority of two-thirds was required to elect. The first ballot gave the Rev. W. Cuthbertson, B.A., of Bishop Stortford almost the required majority, and the second gave him that number with a considerable margin. The usual form of mover and seconder was not adopted as the nomination was taken to be by the committee.

The CHAIRMAN said they all deeply regretted that the two gentlemen nominated had not been able to undertake the duties of chairman. The Union was, he thought, impoverished when it lost from the chair all the great experience as well as pastoral diligence of Dr. Reynolds. It was impoverished, too, if it was not able to show its veneration for those who went out to foreign lands in the spirit of their Master, and when they were not able to have the services of the first Nonconformist who had been appointed to a professorship by Oxford University. He did not say that in depreciation of the nomination before them. They all desired that one who had done such good work in the ministry—one who had the confidence and honour of his brethren, and was so liked for his genial and amiable temper, and had done such good service at the antipodes and at home, as had Mr. Cuthbertson, should sooner or later receive that honour at their hands. He would ask them with the heartiness of Christian men to confirm his nomination. (Cheers.)

A show of hands was then taken, and the nomination was unanimously confirmed.

POSITION OF THE UNION.

The CHAIRMAN said he little expected to find himself in the position he occupied that evening. Nothing but inability would have prevented Mr. Brown from being there. There were very few opportunities of reviewing the work of the Union itself, which usually met to consider the interests of the churches. They had now an opportunity of rejoicing at the position of the Union, and great reason to thank God for the unity He had given to their churches, and the way that unity was expressed by that Union. Much was owing to the indefatigable energy and the loyal devotion to the principles and work of the Union of their friend the secretary. (Cheers.) It was not always an easy or pleasant post to fill, but while Mr. Hannay was ready to listen to any expression of opinion, he reserved to himself the right to pursue the course which he thought best. His strength of character commended itself to the sympathy and respect of that Union. Fifteen years ago the preliminary meetings of the Union used to be attended by about fifteen persons, and the large assembly before him indicated in some measure its growth. People were really getting to belong to the Union, and to pay their subscriptions. Their funds were good, and wisely employed. But its growth in material respects was not so striking as the broad principles which had marked the report and the assembly. They had now come to a period in their history when they were asked to solve what was a comparatively difficult problem—the possibility of recognising perfect fidelity to truth, with the broadest recognition of individual liberty on the part of all those who love the Master. It was the great problem of the time, and came to them as it came to all the churches. When they met together face to face to talk the matter over, they would see better what course should be taken. He had perfect faith in their churches; they were not apart, but there was an abiding indwelling unity which had not been fully developed, and he believed that amidst all difficulties they would be able to maintain their faith in God and love towards one another. (Cheers.) The chairman in conclusion referred to the Eastern question, and the position which Nonconformists held in respect to the question of peace or war.

THE REPORT.

To relieve Mr. Hannay from pressure of work, the report was then read by the Rev. J. B. ROBERTSON, of Harrogate. It commenced by referring to the Hymn-book and Supplement, the sale of which had been 132,100 copies, as against 122,986 in the preceding year. Two new editions are in preparation, one to be sold for one shilling. The Congregational Union lecture, by the Rev. E. R. Conder, has been welcomed by the Press as a substantial and brilliant contribution towards the

settlement of the great controversies with which it deals. The committee have made arrangements for the preparation of a new series of tracts dealing with matters of permanent interest in the life and economy of the churches, and with some of the questions bearing on the doctrine, worship, and organisation of the Christian faith which are most agitating the thought of the day. Amongst these are tracts on the following subjects:—Nonconformity Explained and Vindicated; Baptismal Regeneration; Confirmation; Confession and Absolution; the Christian Ministry not a Priesthood; a Catechism of Congregational Nonconformity; the Religious Obligations of Nonconformists as Citizens. Some 25,000 copies of the report of the special committee on intemperance have been issued, and there is reason to believe that it has given aid and encouragement to those who are specially engaged in the promotion of temperance; that a considerable number of the pastors of the churches have acted on the recommendation of the report, so far as preaching on the sin of drunkenness and on the perils of our national drinking usages is concerned; and that in some cases church temperance societies have been formed. The report then refers to the Congregational Church Aid and Home Missionary Society, to the Conference at Derby in September at which the organisation was finally perfected, and to its ratification by the Union meeting at Leicester a little later. The draft rules had been unanimously adopted by the Home Missionary Society, and submitted to the county associations. On this subject the report says:—

Since that time the subject has been before the county associations for final decision, and the committee are thankful to be able to report that, with the exception of Cheshire, which has postponed decision, and Huntingdonshire, whose Union is a joint association of Congregationalists and Baptists, all the associations of England have given in their adhesion to the new society, and appointed delegates to sit on its council.

The committee state that they regard it as an important part of their work to aid and further every movement towards a more systematic co-operation of the churches in the service of one another, and in the Christian enlightenment of the people, and they trust that in coming years the Union may be honoured, through the Church Aid Society and otherwise, to minister to the strength and growth of Congregationalism in England more fruitfully than ever heretofore. In accordance with the resolution of one of the Leicester meetings, it had been decided to enter into correspondence with the several colleges, inviting them to appoint a special committee without prejudice, to consider whether or not there ought to be specific changes in the college system, and suggesting that such committee should consist of thirty members, appointed by the colleges, and fifteen by that committee. If this proposal were accepted, evidence could be taken, but need not be made public. On the subject of religious communion the report says:—

The question of the basis of religious communion was raised at the time of the autumnal Assembly in a form which created considerable excitement and controversy throughout the churches. It was not raised in any meeting of the Union, nor strictly within the pale of the Union; but in the form of a conference "of those who feel that agreement in theological opinion can no longer be held to be essential to religious communion," to the summoning of which others besides members of the Union were parties. The conference, however, was widely regarded as a challenge to the Congregational churches to accept the principle "that religious communion is not dependent on agreement in theological, critical, or historical opinion," and as a plea for such communion between those who receive and those who reject what have always been regarded by Congregationalists as the cardinal facts and doctrines of Christianity. The committee, regarding the question thus raised as one of vital importance, resolved "to appoint a special committee to consider what steps, if any, should be taken to relieve the anxiety which has been caused by it throughout the Congregational body." It was felt desirable that the committee should be influential and representative, and with this view the following brethren were appointed members:—The Revs. Drs. Allon, Raleigh, Kennedy, Mellor, Thomson, and A. M. Brown; the Revs. J. B. Brown, B.A., J. G. Rogers, B.A., J. C. Harrison, W. Braden, W. Dorling, R. W. Dale, M.A., C. Wilson, M.A., G. S. Barrett, B.A., W. Cuthbertson, B.A., A. Mackenall, B.A., T. Green, M.A., B. Dale, M.A., and J. Matheson, B.A.; and Messrs. Henry Wright, H. Lee, W. H. Conyers, J. Carvell Williams, Dr. F. J. Wood, D. Tomkins, A. J. Shephard, and S. S. Mander. The resolutions adopted by this committee were, with slight alterations, accepted by the general committee, and will be submitted to the Assembly.

The importance of the autumnal meeting of the Union at Leicester having been dwelt upon, it was stated that there had been the usual interchange of courtesies with the Scotch and Irish Unions; that the committee had decided on the inexpediency of the use of proxies in the election of members of the committee; and that both Dr. Reynolds, principal of Chesham College, and the Rev. Dr. James Legge, Professor of Chinese in Oxford University, having declined to be nominated as chairman of the Union, the Rev. W. Cuthbertson, B.A., would be proposed. It was also stated that the committee with a view to fraternal intercourse between the two great sections of the Evangelical body, proposed to send a deputation to the autumnal meeting of the Baptist Union, a proposal which had been very heartily welcomed. During the past year the committee have taken action on a number of public questions—especially the Eastern Question—and reference was made to several questions which it was proposed should be submitted to the present session of the Union, such as the jubilee of

the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. In conclusion, a fitting tribute was paid to the most prominent members of the denomination whose loss had been deplored during the past year, such as Professors Rogers and Herbert; and the Revs. James Matheson, J. Gwyther, James Parsons, H. Bromley, W. P. Lyon, &c.

The Rev. E. J. HARTLAND (Bristol) moved the adoption of the report. He cordially endorsed the remarks made by the chairman about the clear wise head and genial loving heart by which the affairs of the Union had been guided for some years past. He rejoiced that they had at their head such a man, and he thought that in his wisdom they had the brightest hope for the future. (Cheers.)

Mr. ALBERT SPICER seconded the motion, which was adopted unanimously.

The Rev. BRYAN DALE proposed the appointment of James Spicer, Esq., treasurer, the Rev. A. Hannay, secretary, and Messrs. T. L. Devitt and Henry Jones as auditors.

Alderman LAW (Bradford) seconded the motion, and it was adopted.

The Revs. Isaac Jacob and Jesse Hopwood were elected honorary members of the Union, and the meeting was closed with the benediction by the chairman.

MEETING IN UNION CHAPEL, ISLINGTON.

The first public session of the Union took place at half-past nine on Tuesday, in the Union Chapel, Islington, the chairman of the year, the Rev. J. Baldwin Brown, B.A., presiding. This large and beautiful building was crowded in every part, and great numbers of people stood during the whole of the proceedings in the aisles, and even the ante-rooms were filled as the day wore on. The proceedings were opened with singing and a devotional service, conducted by the Rev. J. H. Hollowell.

THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

The CHAIRMAN then ascended the pulpit to deliver his inaugural address. He commenced by saying he firmly believed that the vast and cumbrous apparatus in which the spiritual force of Christianity had been encased, and the pompous form which through all these ages it had been made to wear, were largely responsible for the present condition and aspect of Christ's kingdom; the voice still, as it were, crying in the wilderness, and Christ still waiting for the empire of all human hearts. He held very dearly their simplicity of form and spirit, and the freedom with which the light and the fire of God will play through and vivify their organs. Their communion was an ecclesiastical system more simple in character than any other in the world, and they were thus the better enabled to judge with reason any great questions which came under their consideration. Their Union ought to be the free-parliament of the churches, for they had all the materials for a friendly discussion of the vexed questions of the times, and they had with them the people—the popular element. Repression and not expression was the more dangerous to the liberties of the people. Had not the great statesman, Mr. Gladstone, publicly noted the wonderful unanimity of the action taken by them in the great controversy which was being fought out with regard to the difficulties in the East. It was no new thing to them to know that brutality had Heaven's curse upon it, and to know also that there were rights of people more sacred than those of despots, treaties, and the interests of Great Powers. On the whole, he believed that the entire freedom of the people was the best security of a progress which, however slow, would be real and lasting. The work of their Union was with the people, and had always been among that class which had been the strength and honour of this English nation. The moderation, comparative purity, and freedom from revolutionary tendencies, of the English people, he traced that to the discipline exercised by the churches. It was that religious equality which their churches maintained and proclaimed, that did much to fuse the classes together in the furnace of that tremendous battle so closely that the foundations of the social order in England had never since been shaken for a moment in the wildest storm of revolution; while they presented to-day an aspect of organic unity and stability which were the admiration, and perhaps the envy, of the civilised world. There was still very much to be mended among them; but, taking the whole life of England, even the whole life of the working classes in England, he believed that it was the freest, largest, strongest life which was lived on this earth. To this, he contended, Nonconformists had contributed a noble share, as the history of the eighteenth century showed, and they could not but read with some pride that in Wales, where the Nonconformists were supreme, the Government was making arrangements to shut up one-half of the prisons, for in some cases they could not find even a single criminal to put into them. That was the kind of "conduct" to which the teaching and the discipline of their churches had been mini-trant. The Anglican Church had furnished them with a standard and stimulus, but it was his honest conviction that England could far better have dispensed with all which—not Establishment, bonds bring no blessing—but the men who had adorned and enriched the Establishment had wrought for her, than she could

have spared the spiritual light and heat which had been cherished in, and had brought on the community by, the Nonconformist churches. Still, they had no cause to magnify what they had done for England, or to prophesy what they should do, if the ground was trembling and splitting beneath them, and the whole system of thought and belief on which their churches rested was old, decaying, and vanishing away. The intellectual leaders of their times made slight account of their beliefs and activities, as of things passing away, soon to belong to the fossil past. They were told by these intellectual seers that Christianity had had its day—that the light of the knowledge of the structure of man, and of all things, had glared on their Gospel; and their Inspiration, Incarnation, Resurrection, Immortality, were doomed to vanish; while the earth spirit built up a kingdom of which man was the "Alpha and the Omega" in their room. Nevertheless, they, the adherents of Christianity, were here still, vivid, vital, progressive as ever. Their present limits of freedom would have seemed all too wide to the leaders of the great reforming movement 350 years ago, who set to work, by means of creeds, confessions, and secular supremacies, to mark out the line along which religious thought was expected to travel. He did not blame these men; they acted according to the spirit of the times. France had never learnt the progressive method. She must always in all her revolutions aim at what she considered the perfect result at a bound. Hence, the way-marks along the noble but sorrowful path of her pilgrimage were chiefly wrecks. England, happily, has learnt the lesson through the solid, sober strength of her great middle class, which was always the ballast in the ship of State; and still more through the moderating influence which the sense of a religious duty, a higher law, an invisible but ever present King, brought to bear on the popular heart. But that the great Methodist revival of the last century had brought into the very heart of a multitude of that class, which was verily the dangerous class in the hour of revolution, some belief in a God who did think and care for them, and who set them to reform themselves before reforming the world, one trembled to think of the fiery rain with which they, too, might have been baptized to liberty, equality, and fraternity, when, at the end of the last century, the genius of revolution was abroad in the earth. In England they were feeling the full import of the principles which the French Revolution brought to the front. Professor Clifford proclaimed, "The kingdom of man is at hand," thus placing the formula in clear antagonism to the Gospel proclamation of the "Kingdom of Heaven." His bold, bald Atheism, and the bare, dry desert which his materialism made of life, had startled and shocked not a few, who were tempted to look with sympathy on a system which its advocates set forth with such jubilant confidence, and which seemed to promise deliverance from what appeared to them the somewhat dreary theological pastures of the times. In his present address he (Mr. Brown) wished to say something on the relation of their theology to the intellectual movement of the times, and in the autumn to consider their polity in relation to the social movements which were stirring within and around. He then spoke of the teaching of scientists, or, as he preferred to call them, naturalists, and condemned the common practice of ridiculing those persons from the pulpit; it would be much better to boldly attack them in thoughtfully written books. He felt keen sympathy with Professor Huxley's indignation at the stupid virulence with which scientific men, who were pre-eminently truth-seekers, and should be held in high honour, were assailed. Let them work on and test their theories; from their own camp, as recently from Virchow, would come the warning when they were going too fast. The material for the harmony between their truth and the older wisdom was not yet established. Much thought on both sides was needed still. If revolution be a main-key to the order of the Creation, its origin, its method, its end, would have to be considered, and these could only be settled in congress with the plenipotentiaries of realms of knowledge which lay outside the material. There was much to be done both by the naturalist and the theologian before full harmony became possible. They would have to modify their ideas about many things which they now thought to be as sure as the poles. They would have, not to abandon, but to re-read in the light of a new intelligence many passages of their Bibles, to rise to a larger and more Christian idea of what the Bible asserted itself to be, and of the mission which it was sent to accomplish in our world. But they should not have to give up as effete or false one word of the everlasting Gospel. Nothing was more notable in the great intellectual movement of the age than the determination to find, as Mr. Harrison said, "the centre of our religion and our philosophy in man, and man's earth." After quoting from Professor Tyndall and Mr. Herbert Spencer, to indicate that the chasm between them, so far as scientific observation went, was absolutely impassable, he said there were not wanting significant signs that men were beginning to find this region of fact a flat and dreary desert, when unlit by gleams, and unblest by visitants, which come down to it from a higher sphere. The changed attitude of the non-Christian schools was notable, and was, he thought, largely owing to the fact that Christianity no longer made itself responsible for enormous political and social wrongs, which through the latter ages of mediæval Chris-

tendom made its enemies rage, and blaspheme the most sacred name. And further, the thinking and the aiming of man from the purely human basis, lay marvellously in that very direction into which, from the first, Revelation had been seeking to guide his way. The Gospel did not come only to reveal, but to quicken; it was power from God, it was the life of God, which it brought into the world. Man must work out a very high scheme of life and duty from the purely human basis; but "how to do," he found not, till the power was revealed within. Take the doctrine of self-devotion to humanity which even Comte preached, with a passionate ardour altogether admirable, if there were any intellectual basis for it in his philosophy. Mr. Stuart Mill, again, who was surely nearer to the kingdom of heaven than appeared, the last workings of whose mind revealed a strange sympathy with ideas and hopes which his school sets itself to destroy, developed a very noble doctrine of unselfishness; and Mr. Harrison wrote with passion of an ideal humanity, worthy of that absolute devotion of which the Christian saw the perfect example in the self-sacrifice of the Lord. It was all man, of man, through man, and to man, this philosophy; but it had standards of morality which they had been wont to claim as Christian; it had doctrines of self-devotion with which Christianity inspired its martyrs, hopes and visions of the future which seemed to be woven of the same stuff as the prophetic pictures of the Word of God. And yet it was absolutely contemptuous of Christianity; it knew nothing of inspiration, incarnation, resurrection, or immortality. It had the ideas of life and duty which Christianity had cultivated, but it ignored the Christianity. Thus they had this curious phenomenon—a Kingdom of Man contemptuous of the Kingdom of Heaven, in which "the Son of Man" was King; and refusing all aid from its Gospel and its ministers, in trying to carry out the ends which the heavenly kingdom was established to secure! The Christianity of the Saviour had suffered two great wrongs at the hand of the Christianity of the Church. In the first place its arrogant judgments from its narrow theological grounds had tended to set against it, in all ages, the parties and the men who, in the secular sphere, had been inspired by the Divine passion of progress. In the second place there was the inhumanity of the Church; its cold, jealous, antithetic attitude towards what it called natural man and his doings, to that which grew inevitably out of the nature, constitution, and conditions of our race. They had been for ages frowning on the human; the human was now taking its revenge. The incarnation had been accepted and upheld as a doctrine with admirable fidelity; it had been obscured and distorted as a fact—as the fact, the fact underlying all human history and ruling all human development—by the policy of the Church through all the ages of Christendom until now. By their narrow views of the true development of the human, by their attitude towards "the world," by the kind of separation which they enjoined and enforced, they were working with the priest, and were stealing the fruit of the Incarnation from the sobbing, restless world around. They had lived to themselves in their kingdom, as the Jews did, instead of throwing wide the gates of the Lord's kingdom to the throngs of the great human race. Dominant theology had to a very considerable extent presented ideas of God and of His ways—the sacerdotal on the one hand, the high Calvinist on the other—which men found to be incredible. "The humanist" has now taken up the question, and declared that he could solve it on his own ground and in his own way. The winds of wild speculation were unloosed, and the storm was on them. What should be their attitude? He thought they should rejoice in the elevated tone of the ideas and aims of the school, which affected to disdain them. They should also rejoice if the careful study of man's nature, needs, and tendencies made men see that selfishness destroyed, while wise self-devotion edified souls, families, and States. But above all let them bring more humanity into their Gospel, and, while holding fast the truth of the Incarnation, let them see that they made the life of it a power in their dealing with men. They might hold their Pan-Anglican Synods, Congregational Unions, Wesleyan Conferences, in noble and stately sanctuaries, with incense and self-gratulation and music of song. But just as the Roman world was in deadly danger of dying of the vice and misery of slavery when Christianity saved it, so in these days society was in deadly danger of dying of the vice and wickedness which festered in the slums and lairs where multitudes of their brethren herd like the beasts; and Christianity must save it again otherwise than by meetings, or it must abdicate its royal supremacy as a religion, and sit mowing with the ghosts of the vanished Paganisms in the shades. They should maintain calmness and steadfastness in the contemplation of this movement towards materialism and atheism, through the depth of their conviction that Christ had a hold on the world which it could never shake off, and that atheism could never furnish even the briefest resting-place for the minds of their race. But how about themselves? How far were they sound and wholesome within? There was a time of serious conflict before them and all the churches. He looked forward to the next quarter of a century with anxiety for the young people before him, who would have to fight in the front of the battle. There were some few amongst them whose teaching tended to discharge the Gospel of that power which it derived from the revelation of the mind of God in the Scrip-

tures, who cared little for the great historic facts of Christianity, and who attached no substantial meaning to such words as Inspiration, Incarnation, Resurrection, and Immortality. If asked what was left of a Gospel they replied there was left very beautiful, elevating, stimulating, sanctifying ideas; ideas which would work out in time what might be regarded as the salvation of the human race. But they had to learn that man never had been, would, or could be, saved by ideas, as Athens had taught them. It was the solid substance of Divine fact behind the ideas, the vital power of God of which that fact was the conductor, which sanctified and saved. The Gospel was not a noble and beautiful speculation about God, about life, about duty; it was the tale of what the God who made the world had in His own living person done and suffered for the world. Here was the firm, strong, broad basis of Christian communion. A communion which had feeble hold on the truth God has given to unite and compact mankind, had in it the principle of decay and the prophecy of dissolution, and could only in the end mock the hopes of all longing hearts. They had been somewhat imperatively invited to religious communion on a basis independent of doctrinal ideas, and in view of this course of action had been proposed from which he utterly dissented. Though reluctant to speak on such a subject from the chair, he must appeal to their generosity. He did not think they should allow action to be forced on them by a Conference outside their pale. Till questions were raised in the Union, he thought they should better consult their dignity and the interests of the Churches by refusing to recognise the action of a knot of individuals whose number and weight they had no means of estimating, who carried on operations outside their fellowship. These persons demanded that religious communion should be regarded as independent of theological views. Let them demand it. The demand brought them no nearer to, and removed them no further from, the pulpits or the hearts of Independents. He denied that there was here any question of dangerous laxity. His conviction was very strong that they had attached altogether too much importance to the Leicester Conference as regarded the condition and tendencies of the ministry, and that they ought, following a well-known precedent, "to be quiet," and to go on with their work. As to the question whether the Independents were an Evangelical body, it seemed to him there was but one mode of solving it—by being Evangelical. They had nothing but their lives to speak. They had no authoritative document; no sharp line beyond which a man or a church must be cut off. They dare not formulate one; it would be treason to the word and spirit of their King. But not the less strong and sacred was the inward bond of loyalty to the Gospel which bound them; none the less did those who forsook the Gospel cut themselves off from all that was vital in their communion, and what glow and vigour there may be in their life. They could trust to the testimony of their life and of their history; and spare their protestations. Must they, of all the great Evangelical churches pray the world to believe that they were loyal to the Gospel, and must vindicate their faith by repeating their creed! No, let them not think so meanly of themselves in the matter of their loyalty in the truth as it is in Jesus. There was no need to pass any such resolution as would be offered there. They were saying the same thing before the world in a hundred nobler ways. The serious influences working in the minds of their young people must be met by a larger, stronger, more real, and more effectual Gospel. And this was being done. Declarations and confessions meant nothing in these days, and if the light of the Gospel was bright and clear in their teaching and living, it could not be hid in these days. They might spare their declarations. If their Independence were to become a thing needing to be attached to the great Evangelical movement by a declaration on the one hand, or be a theatre for the development of the outcome of the God-consciousness in man on the other, it might, so far as he was concerned, break up and vanish as soon as it liked, and the sooner the better. They were too fearful of their reputation. Then he thought the resolution was a helpless theological dogma. It would be looked upon as a creed, and was not worthy of their theological reputation. But opposition to any formal declaration of doctrine did not mean indifference to Evangelical truth. Some of the most intensely Evangelical men among them were most earnestly opposed to it, and from the very depth of their love for the Gospel and their assurance of its ultimate triumphant power. To sum up the whole matter, his conviction was very deep indeed that if they could see and say that the loyalty of the Independent Churches to the great truths of the Gospel which their fathers believed and preached, and to a true spiritual freedom, was too unquestionable to need either affirmation or vindication; it would be all the notice which the Leicester Conference needed at their hands. He thought that if they could let the life of Christ be seen as the great power of God in their life, and the life of their churches, they would find a wonderful reversion to orthodoxy in many of those whose language and tendencies now filled them with distrust and alarm. No doctrine about Christ could unite men. It was Christ in them, Christ in the Church, who was the bond of unity drawing men and holding them together. They talked of widening or narrowing the basis; but the basis was made for us. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." What they could widen,

and what needed widening was their vision of the depth and range of His influence over human hearts. He believed it needed all that the Cross and Passion, the Death and Burial, the Resurrection and Ascension, included, to furnish the lifting power which set man's life on the spiritual level, with its face up to heaven and God, and to make his history a glorious progress. Many noble Christian hearts were impatient over the sectarian divisions of Christendom. For himself he would rather have a sect in every village in which the members could speak out with their whole heart, and be sure of the sympathy of a little band of their fellows, than have a wide communion calling itself a Church, in which Ritualist, Evangelical and Rationalist, Trinitarian and Unitarian, would be listened to with equal composure, and where souls could fall asleep with equal comfort under them all. The world had nothing to hope from churches that reduced to a clammy, colourless pulp the great facts and truths of the Catholic faith. There were some who seemed bent on discharging the Bible of every element which made its word a gospel, and Christ of every pulse of power to uplift, redeem, and save. It was the tale of Jesus and the Resurrection which created Christendom; it was the old, the everlasting Gospel, which had inspired its effort, kindled its aspiration, and elevated its hope from that day till now; it was the life of Christ that created in His own day such passionate earnestness and fond devotion, and afterwards inspired the company in the upper chamber in Jerusalem with enthusiasm. At the present time the tempest was raging around them, a time of searching for them and for their churches was come. One thing, and but one thing, could brace them to meet it with that calm constancy which their fathers carried through many a wilder storm than this—the firm assurance that Christ was King, and would be King, and that He saw the means, though earth or hell opposed, of ruling all that threatened the destruction, to the glorious enlargement and advancement of His kingdom, and of gathering the children of the great human household to the Father's home, and joy on high.

At the close of his address the chairman was greeted with loud cheers.

ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS.

A Reference Committee having been appointed, it was agreed that, in view of the discussion that was about to follow being of unusual interest, the standing orders relating to the time to be occupied by movers of resolutions and speakers should be suspended, in order that the discussion might be full and thorough, and as far as possible free from any fetters.

The Rev. A. HANNAY then proposed that as it was desirable to discuss and pass at that sitting a resolution referring to peace or war, the discussion about to take place on Dr. Mellor's motion should, if it lasted up to 1.45 p.m., be adjourned until the next meeting of the Union on Friday next. This was also agreed to.

THE BASIS OF COMMUNION.

The Rev. Dr. MELLOR, who was received with loud applause, mingled with a very few hisses and cries of "Go into the pulpit," which request, however, was not complied with, then moved the following resolutions:—

That in view of the uneasiness produced in the churches of the Congregational order by the proceedings of the recent conference at Leicester on the terms of religious communion, the assembly feels called upon to reaffirm, that the primary object of the Congregational Union is, according to the terms of its own constitution, to uphold and extend Evangelical religion.

That the assembly appeals to the history of the Congregational churches generally, as evidence that Congregationalists have always regarded the acceptance of the facts and doctrines of the evangelical faith revealed in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as an essential condition of religious communion in Congregational churches; and that among these have always been included the Incarnation, the Atoning Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, His Resurrection, His Ascension and Mediatorial Reign, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the renewal of men.

That the Congregational Union was established on the basis of these facts and doctrines is, in the judgment of the assembly, made evident by the declaration of faith and order adopted at the annual meeting in 1833; and the assembly believes that the churches represented in the Union hold these facts and doctrines in their integrity to this day.

He said he did not rise with any pleasure to move these resolutions, not that he did not agree with their substance and form—for he altogether differed on that point from the remarks that had been made by the chairman in his address—but he moved the resolutions in accordance with an obligation which had been laid on him. He had protested against having the duty assigned to him, but it was no use, he found, to protest against the "powers that be." He thought no one would contest the statement contained in the outset in the first resolution—namely, that there had been uneasiness—"Hear, hear," and a cry of "No"—there had been great uneasiness—"Hear, hear"—and there had been extensive uneasiness. ("Hear, hear," and a cry of "No.") He ventured to say this, because he probably travelled as much about the country as any one, and he had never attended any meeting since the Leicester Conference had been held, at which he had not met with great uneasiness,

so that the "No" which had just been uttered simply meant nothing. (Laughter.) There had been very great misapprehension as to the nature of the Leicester Conference and the authority of that conference. It had been understood by some men as forming a sort of organic connection with the Congregational Union, and it had also awakened a malicious triumph in the minds of many who saw in that conference another illustration of the inevitable tendency of all free religious organisations to swerve away from the elements of tangible faith. But it had also awakened serious lamentations in the minds of many men who were prone to yield themselves to panics. But where there was a body of the magnitude of this Union, they had no right, he believed, to submit either to misapprehension or misrepresentation which tended to imperil or damage the interests of the body they represented, and if the Congregational Union thought their interests were imperilled or damaged, it had the right, he contended, in spite of what the chairman had said, to issue a declaration to that effect. (Hear, hear.) Let it be distinctly understood that this Union had not met for the purpose of imposing any restriction on freedom of thought or expression, although that had been plentifully, but untruthfully alleged. There was no member of the Congregational Union who entertained such a fallacy or such a preposterous and abortive notion. It was not therefore a question of the freedom of individual thought or utterance at all, and did not by any means touch the question of individual freedom, but was simply a question of association or fellowship, which was quite a different thing. Let it not be said either that this Union was less ardent or enthusiastic in its desire to see an enlarged communion than the Leicester Conference was—but that was not the question in dispute. But the Leicester Conference was wider in its basis than Christianity itself. At all events he believed so, and if the Union believed it, it had the right to say it, and he believed the Union would say it that very day. There were two phrases it should be remembered that had been used, namely, "religious communion" and "Christian communion." They might mean the same thing, but what was meant by religious communion? What was the minimum point upon which communion was to be based? Was there to be any element of agreement at all? and if so, what? Was it to be a position of a religious nature which would be wide enough to be advanced throughout the world? Was that to be the basis? or was it to be the sense of fear, or the sense of infinity, or the sense of the mysterious, or was it to be the doctrine of absolute dependence? Was it to be one or all of these things? That basis would certainly be sufficiently wide. But even in that case an embodied representative would not be a Congregational Union, a Wesleyan Conference, a Presbyterian Synod, a Pan-Anglican Synod, an Ecumenical Council, but a general assembly of all the followers of all the religions upon the face of the earth. (Applause.) Was this the religious communion they required? (Cries of "No.") He was thankful for that answer, and he would turn it upon them very speedily. (Laughter.) If that was not the communion they desired, then on what principle was the basis to be limited? Was it to be on the ground that the religions to which he had referred were not religions. They were religions as much as the Christian religion. Or was it because their supporters were not ardent, and earnest, and self-sacrificing, if not for the propagation of their religions, at least for their maintenance? Upon what principle then were they to be excluded? The religious communion of which they had heard had to discount agreement on matters theological, historical, and critical, but could they be discounted—completely discounted, and yet be a communion not extending to all religions on the face of the earth? He submitted that they could not be confederated simply upon the basis of susceptibilities. Politicians were not confederated in that form, and although they had a general sense of patriotism and a basis of common conviction, yet when they ceased to have their common convictions on the great questions to the front, they went into different lobbies to fight, and took seats on different sides of the House. But he might be told that this was not the religious communion that was prayed for, and that he was contending with an unsubstantial spectre, but if so, he was not responsible for the mistake, for he had endeavoured to understand the words written and uttered by the promoters of the Leicester Conference, and if he had been misled he had been misled. Was he right in saying, according to the Leicester Conference, that they need not believe in the personality of God? Yes or no. (Loud cries of "Yes.") Was he right in saying that they need not believe in the incarnation of God and Christ? Yes or no. (Loud cries of "Yes.") Was he right in saying that they need not believe in the death of Christ for the redemption of man? Yes or no. (Loud cries of "Yes.") Was he right in saying that they need not believe in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead with the body which was deposited in the grave? Yes or no. (Loud cries of "Yes.") And yet religious communion was being prayed for on the basis of the possible rejection of every one of these things. ("Hear, hear," and a few signs of dissent.) If any gentleman said "No," he was prepared to give the *ipsissima verba*. If it was not to be a religious communion, was it to be a Christian com-

munion? and if a Christian communion, what were its characteristic and defining elements? He held that Christian communion meant communion with Christ, and secondly, that those who had communion with Christ constituted the essential and co-essential factors and co-efficients of Christian communion. (Hear, hear.) What was union with Christ? It was the union of one person with another person. (Hear, hear.) They might have communion with the sun, the moon, the stars, the blooming flowers, or the springing grass. That would be poetry, but religion was something higher than poetry and deeper. (Applause.) If the Saviour could not feel his hand, and if he could not return its grasp, it would not be communion. If the Saviour could not hear his prayer, and give human answer, it was not communion—it would be poetry. (Hear, hear.) Now here is the gist of the whole question, Who is Christ? What do we know of Christ? Where do we learn what we know of Christ? That was the gist of the whole matter. He had to do with the Christ of history, and not with a Christ who had been made up in the alembic of imagination. The Christ in whom he believed, and in whom his father and mother believed, was the Christ who was foretold by prophets, who was in the bosom of the Father, who was made flesh, who dwelt among us, who wrought miracles, who died for us, who descended into the grave, who rose again, who ascended on high, who sitteth at the right hand of God, and who will come to be our Judge; and that was the same Christ who was preached from Congregational pulpits. That was the Christ who was preached by the founders of this Union, and the Christ who was preached by the enormous mass of those who constitute this Union at the present day. But that was not the Christ of the Leicester Conference. (Loud applause.) And yet they spoke of a Christ and their devotion to him, and they spoke of their future communion with that Christ. Where did they find that Christ of whom they spoke? They spoke in the highest terms of his character, but where did they find the character of Christ, and what was the character of that Christ? We read of Christ's sympathy with the hungry, how He looked upon the multitude and was smitten with pity, and we read that His sympathy took the form of a miracle by which He fed famished peoples. We read also of His pity for the suffering, and also how by a miracle He opened the eyes of the blind, and unstopped the ears of the deaf. We read of His brotherly sorrow for those who had lost their loved ones, and how by miracle He took gently by the hand the maid, and she arose; and how He stopped the bier on its way to the burial, and how He called Lazarus from the grave. We read of all this, but did they know anything of a Christ that had not been revealed in connection with miraculous history? If they had, he did not know him—(applause)—and he had never even heard of him. But this Christ of the Leicester Conference was a fiction and nothing more, and he rejected him as he would the Christ of Renan, Strauss, and F. W. Newman. He did not say that that Christ should not receive his homage, but he would say that he had no power to command it, and he would say that that Christ was not the Christ who was the Son of God. He was not the Christ who would be their God for ever and ever. (Applause.) Then let those of the Leicester Conference seek for some other name by which to designate the revolting abstraction which had been made out of *disjecta membra* of Gospel history, so as not to rob the Christ of the Congregational churches of the glory of His essential nature and of His title to those attributes which for 2,000 years had been held in reverence. (Applause.) He would ask them how the promoters of the Leicester Conference, differing as they do by a whole diameter of thought touching the work and person of Christ, could have communion with each other? Could they who believed in the resurrection and ascension have communion with those who disputed or denied both? He contended that they did not worship the same being—(Hear, hear)—that they did not co-operate in the same work—(Hear, hear)—that they did not preach the same Gospel. There never could be co-operation, therefore communion in such a case was out of the question. (Hear, hear.) In resuming his seat he would refer simply to one other point—namely, the manner in which some of the gentlemen of the Leicester Conference were disposed to treat the authority of the Epistles. He could not understand the method or the spirit of that treatment. But there was a desire to undervalue the Epistles in comparison with the Gospels, and, therefore, when he was told that he was driven back upon the Apostle Paul, the only thing that amused him was that this objection should arise from the bosom of the Congregational body. Who was St. Paul? Was he a volunteer in the ranks of Christianity? He always thought that he was not a volunteer at all, but was pressed pretty strongly into the service. (Hear, hear.) And he always thought that our Saviour did not teach all truth, but told His apostles that He had many things to say which He could not say then, and he had also thought that Christ laid the foundation of His temple, and promised to give, stone by stone, according as they were required for the building of the temple when He had ascended. But now, were the apostles to take stone by stone, then they would be told, "Oh! you are driven back on Paul." (Laughter.) Driven back on Paul! Well, it might be the influence of tradition, or the influence of what his father or mother had taught him with regard to respect for

the sacred Scriptures, or it might be that he had cherished the illusions of a lifetime; but whatever it might be, he preferred to be thrown back on St. Paul a thousand times to being thrown back on some who would fain be his teachers, and who had now become his censors. ("Hear, hear," and applause.) In conclusion, he would only say that if he should lose his hold on that which he now believed, there would not be much left him for guidance in this life, and there would be none at all for safe guidance to the life that was to come. (Loud applause.)

The Rev. C. WILSON, of Plymouth, in seconding the resolution, observed that there was no proposal to narrow or alter the accepted basis of this Union, or to impose any subscription to any formulated creed as a condition of membership in Congregational churches. If there had been any such proposal embodied, he did not believe either a mover or a seconder would be found for the resolutions. He understood the resolutions to be a challenge to the assembly to affirm distinctly and decisively whether or not the whole basis of the Union was to be changed, and whether or not membership in the Congregational churches involved substantial agreement in the primary beliefs of Christian religion. This question having been raised, it should be fairly met; and they could not ignore the fact that the question was not only before this assembly now, but also before the country. There were some—and he was sorry to find the chairman among them—who under-estimated the impression that had been produced by the Leicester Conference. Uneasiness had undoubtedly existed, and did exist at present, not only in relation to some secondary matter, but in relation to the existence of the Congregational churches. Possibly there was not sufficient ground for that uneasiness, and it might reflect not more unjustly on this body than upon those brethren who had expressed sympathy with the Leicester Conference, and who might feel that they had been misunderstood and greatly wronged; but in that case they would be glad to have the misapprehension removed. If, on the other hand, there was ground for this uneasiness, and that the time had come to make a new departure, then let them know precisely where they were, so that those who set Christianity above Congregationalism, and who cared more for evangelical truth than for any form of ecclesiastical polity, might be in a position to decide how far they could honestly and consistently retain membership with this Union. He had heard it said that the action of this Union was humiliating, but he thought it would be a far deeper humiliation to the Union if they had not the courage and honesty to face the suspicion of unfaithfulness which had been raised, and if they shirked challenging the opinion of their body upon the question. So far as the question of religious communion might be a personal one the assembly of course had nothing at all to do with it, and every man must judge for himself how far he could go, consistent with loyalty to his own convictions. But the matter before them was not a personal one, but was a question of fellowship of the churches, and the basis of that fellowship would give its character to their work and to their own body. To him it seemed that fellowship in worship and work could only be true and hearty and honest according as it was based upon a distinct and emphatic agreement in the primary beliefs of the Christian religion. (Hear, hear.) To set creed against life or life against creed, as though those two things were easily separable, was altogether raising a false issue, and it was nothing to the point to refer to the excellencies of individual men. This question having arisen, it was necessary that the atmosphere should be cleared from this darkening suspicion, and to declare that Congregationalism was rooted in the fundamental ideas of the Christian faith. As far as he understood, the Leicester Conference sought to lay down the lines of a perfect creed, or else to exclude from the basis of fellowship all reference to theological opinion; they sought to formulate a creed so accurate in its definition that there should be no room for difference of opinion, or, in place of this they would accept a basis of fellowship so broad and so elastic that every form of religious opinion should have an equal place in it, and be equally right. Now, he contended, there was no middle position between those two, and if so, the resolutions now proposed would be untenable. But were they now to forsake the old paths, and to reject Him who had led them so far along their way? Were they to leave the path of the Great Teacher who had guided their fathers through for centuries past? Were they to reject the spirit of Christianity, and surrender themselves to the tendencies of modern thought? Were they now to adopt as their own fashionable dogmas of the higher regions of thought that religious certainty was impossible, and were they now to stand up in their churches and say, "We have no message for this sin-stricken world as a body; we do not know what we have got to say to you"? Surely not. They had work to do along the pathway which their fathers had traversed, and he hoped that the assembly to-day would show that they were true, as their fathers were, to the essential principles of evangelical truth.

The CHAIRMAN announced that the Rev. Dr. Parker would now move an amendment, and added that there were also two or three other amendments which had been sent in. One of these—by the Rev. W. Currie—stated that in view of the difference of opinion which must necessarily exist on the question of evangelical speculation the assembly

believed that the spirit of the Declaration of Faith and Order published in 1833 indicated with sufficient distinctness both the religious working and the basis of the Congregational Union and the individual liberty of all its members; and that any partial reaffirmation of doctrinal beliefs was uncalled for. The Rev. A. REED also had a resolution to substitute for the word "revealed" in the second resolution, the words "by inspiration of God," and that after the word "included," in the same resolution, the following words be inserted: "faith in one true and living God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

The Rev. M. J. ACKLAND also had handed in an amendment to the effect that any renewed statement of the objects of the Congregational Union was unnecessary.

The Rev. Dr. PARKER commenced by saying that he had not arranged with any gentleman to second the amendment, but he hoped it would be seconded for the sake of eliciting a full expression of opinion. He should have moved the previous question, but that it might be interpreted that they were afraid for the Evangelical faith. The longer he lived the more he was assured that the Evangelical faith, as held by Congregationalists all over the world, was true to the letter and to the spirit. They were strong in proportion as they were Evangelical, and therefore he could have no difficulty or hesitation in re-affirming the grand and venerable doctrines passed by the name of Evangelical. It was because he was so deeply attached to the Evangelical faith that he objected to all such miniatures and compends as that which he found in the second resolution. Evangelical faith was not to be spoken of in sides, and fragments, and shreds, but was to be spoken of as a sum total; and the moment they began to single out three or four leading dominant propositions or dogmas they all began to throw something of discredit and doubt upon those points not brought into the statement. (Applause.) Were there not other doctrines besides those enumerated in the second resolution that entered into the true statement of individual faith? Did they not believe something about the Trinity? (Hear, hear.) Did they not believe something about the immortality of the soul? He asked, therefore, why they should cull three, or four, or more of the leading principles of Evangelical faith, and leave unnoticed some others which were, at least, of equal importance. (Hear, hear.) When there was an alarm of fire he could understand the inmates of a house seizing some valuable portions of the fittings, because there was danger of their destruction. But there was no danger in this case. (Applause.) There was no fire in the great house of Congregationalism, nor had the smell of fire passed upon any of their grand and venerable doctrines. (Applause.) He held, therefore, that to legislate or resolve in a spirit of panic, or some panic or uneasiness, was to take a false position, and possibly adopt a mischievous course. In his amendment he made no reference to the Leicester Conference. He thought they ought to be on their guard lest they unduly magnified the aims of the Leicester Conference. They ought to be strong and not easily alarmed. He believed the promoters of that conference made a great mistake in time and place, and that their action was likely to occasion considerable apprehension, and do considerable mischief. He understood that certain gentlemen, whose personal character and public service entitled them to a place in any assembly of good men, made certain proposals, and with the view of having them thoroughly ventilated and discussed; and he also understood that this was done, not only with conspicuous ability, but in a temper and a tone which had not been challenged; and that having been done, the Leicester Conference promoters were answered by speeches and arguments on the other side. He feared, therefore, that dealing with the matter now in an organised capacity, in his opinion, they might be taking certain of their brethren at a disadvantage; also, they did not mean to fulminate in any way against freedom of action. They were bound to look at the influences of an action of this kind upon public opinion. The resolution pointed in this direction, but if they looked a little further in the same direction they would see whether they had not done enough by openly and frankly meeting the Leicester Conference on the spot. He believed he was right in saying that argumentatively the Leicester Conference was vanquished by representatives of this Union, and the chairman of the Leicester Conference had since acknowledged as much. He might, however, be giving undue honour to the Leicester Conference, because when he came to the church this morning he credited them with common-sense and ordinary sanity, but if they had done the monstrous things represented in the speech they had just listened to, he feared he had been indulging too much in the spirit of Congregational charity. (Laughter and applause.) He thought, for instance, that the promoters of the Leicester Conference had had fathers and mothers who had taught them to read the Bible, but if they had made propositions, such as might be made by people who had had no religious training, then they must be dealt with on that basis. In the meantime, however, they must give honour to those gentlemen as brethren; this was no intellectual recreation to them. They did not make these proposals merely for the sake of agitating the Congregational body and exciting uneasiness throughout the land. They thought, they prayed, they served, and they loved, and he wanted their manhood, their character, and their sincerity to be openly, frankly, and carefully recognised.

But if the whole machinery of Congregationalism was to be brought to bear on any half-dozen gentlemen who got up a conference, where was the work of the Congregational Union to end? In his opinion, evangelical faith would be placed too frequently and unnecessarily on its trial and defence. (Hear, hear.) He must observe, however, that if the question was so simple as to be readily answered—as it had been that morning by a loud “Yes” or an equally loud “No”—if all these great theological problems and desires of the human heart could be answered categorically with a “Yes” or a “No,” then he had been undergoing a pain of soul and heart to no purpose in striving, by the study of the whole oracles of God, to find out the full meaning of the truth as it is in Jesus. (Cheers.) Scientific men valued above everything a fact, but he believed that truth was larger than any fact. The truth was an immeasurable infinite quantity, and they could not get it by resolution or formulating creeds, but by bloody sweat, by nightly prayer, by Gethsemane sufferings and sorrows. If any of their brethren saw a new view of truth, and had a proposal to submit, which might seem to him to be of value, let it by all means be stated. He believed they had the truth so far, but God had more light and truth to breathe forth from His holy Word, and if any one had anything to show them let there be the most unrestricted liberty. Let him tell their friends of the Leicester Conference, however, that they must not imagine that if they run away from the Congregational Union, they would leave its members in a bondhouse. He made a broad distinction, however, between religious communion and co-operative ecclesiastical fellowship. He believed with the chairman that Mr. A. J. Scott was one of the noblest men who ever lived, but it was one thing to hold communion with a man, and another to ask him to preside at the Lord's table in his (Dr. Parker's) church, or to occupy his pulpit. He could have the freest, the most definite religious communion with Mr. James Martineau, from whom he had heard words that made his heart move within him, and he had heard him say that some of the finest hymns in the English language had been written by Charles Wesley. Now, such a man was not to be treated as a heathen, and though he might have pleasant religious communion with a man, yet he could not as a member of the Congregational body ask Dr. Martineau to occupy his pulpit. He asked them to prefer his amendment, or the alternative resolution, as he preferred to call it, because it made no reference to a local and transient event, and did not give undue importance to an event which need not influence opinion or attract the attention of this Union at all. As to uneasiness, he might say, parenthetically, that sometimes there was uneasiness created in the Congregational body by an appointment to the chair. Did they suppose they could obviate uneasiness. Someone was always uneasy, and uneasiness was not to be met by resolution but by noble conduct uncomplaining patience, and steadfast attachment to the ministry they had received at the Cross of Christ. In the second place they should accept his amendment because there was at least one tone of charity to the outlying spheres of Christian thought and Christian endeavour, and he had found no such tone in the original resolution. He thought they ought to recognise diversity of thought and difference of temperament, and the amendment which he proposed did send out a very brief message to those who might be thinking whether the terms of religious communion might not be enlarged and multiplied. Thirdly, he asked them to adopt the amendment because it said everything about the evangelical faith which the original resolution wished to maintain, and because it speaks of the evangelical faith as a whole, and not of any special point or dogma of evangelical faith. It referred to the whole history of the Evangelical Union, and took its stand on accomplished facts. (Cheers.) He begged to move the amendment:—

That whilst this Assembly views hopefully every honourable effort to extend the terms of personal religious communion, it is of opinion that co-operative fellowship on the part of Christian churches, as between churches and any of their organised forms, can be made complete and useful only by the acceptance of a common doctrinal basis, and therefore the Assembly solemnly reaffirms its adhesion to those evangelical doctrines which the Congregational Union has maintained throughout the whole period of its existence.

The Rev. J. W. AVELING, of Northampton, who spoke briefly from the other end of the church, who was almost inaudible to all except those around him, seconded the resolution, and was understood to say he agreed with everything that Dr. Parker had said.

Mr. J. A. PICTON, M.A., then advanced to the platform to speak.

A MEMBER in the body of the church said he rose to protest against Mr. Picton speaking on that platform until the question of communion was settled.

The Rev. Dr. ALLON trusted the brethren would give Mr. Picton the fairest hearing, for at present he was a member of the Union.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Picton has the absolute right to be heard. (Cheers.)

Mr. PICTON said he thought the best contribution he could make to the discussion would be a short explanation, which should be as much to the point as possible. He was not in favour either of the resolution or the amendment, but perhaps some

explanations might facilitate the discussion on the subject. He acknowledged with hearty gratitude the kindness, charity, and generosity with which the sayings and doings of the Leicester Conference had been uniformly criticised. Some observations made that morning appeared to imply a misunderstanding of the objects of the Leicester Conference. It seemed to be supposed that the conference met together for the purpose of denouncing certain theological opinions precious to the vast majority of this Union. Now, the circular summoning the conference stated its object to be—“To take cognisance of the fact that whether we will or not the points of communion are gradually widening, and to ask how far this may be permitted to go.” There were gentlemen who attended that Conference who were in true agreement with the whole of the doctrines briefly set out in the resolution, and who would feel it to be a very painful thing that they should be supposed to sympathise with the sort of negations that had been dealt with that morning. But, of course, there was something else to be said. The extreme left had been spoken of by the chairman with his usual kindness and charity, but with most emphatic disapproval. Now, of the extreme left a certain question was sometimes asked, the answer to which would be an answer also to a good deal else. The question asked was this, “Why do not the two or three persons who are supposed to represent the extreme left in theological opinions openly leave the Congregational Union and join the Unitarians, or some other congregation with which they might have more sympathy? For the simplest of all reasons, they did not find any other body with which they had more sympathy, and they have not found any other religious community in which they were so much at home.” (Hear, hear, and laughter.) This great question needed to be considered as Dr. Parker had considered it, from a spiritual and religious point of view rather than morally and intellectually. Speaking for himself, and perhaps some others, they had been brought up from the beginning of their lives under what they believed to be the blessed influences associated with evangelical tradition, and they had been led to feel the bitterness of the carnal life, and to realise the glories of the spiritual life that was manifested to all the world in Jesus Christ, and they had been able to realise the power of the Cross of Christ in reorganising the ignoble carnal nature, raising them to sympathy with the spirit of the Lord—yea, with the spirit of the Eternal. Be it borne in mind that they did not come to their present intellectual position by a leap—in a day, or a month, or a year; they did not come to it without earnest struggling and prayer and deep suffering; but this they had found as a matter of experience, that as they had been compelled to yield, in obedience to what they felt to be the force of argument, this and that point commonly avowed by evangelical religion, yet their evangelical religion had not gone from them, and they still rejoiced most of all in the prayers of earnest, zealous, evangelical men, and they did rejoice to aid where they could in their labours, and they had enjoyed their spiritual utterances. Yet they were asked to leave them and go elsewhere. Why, it was like turning them out of their native climate—(laughter)—into what would be to them a cold and depressive atmosphere. They did not feel called upon to make a change which they felt would be deleterious to their spiritual welfare. In the course they persisted in taking they followed constitutional independence, as it had been at any rate hitherto recognised and carried out. Each church, they had been taught and believed, was complete within itself—not, of course, disregarding the necessity for alliance and mutual assistance, but still so far as government was concerned, it was supposed to be complete and free within itself. No creed had ever been allowed to be enforced, at any rate by external authority, upon any of our churches. The eloquent speeches uttered from year to year from the chair of this Union had assured them and the world that they should spurn the aid of creeds and instruments, and that they should trust to the Spirit of God to lead them into any truth that had not yet been discovered. Now, had it come to this, he asked, that this freedom of spirit was only to be trusted within limits—namely, so long as it led men to agree point by point with the Union? He thought the chairman in his discourse that morning had shown the acknowledgment of such a thing would be unworthy of the Congregational Union. On the other hand, it had been asked, and to this point he wished to come, “Are there no limits whatever? Is no one to be admitted to personal communion or church fellowship with the Union, whatever be his opinions or whatever be his character?” They need not fear it, for he believed in the selective affinities. (Laughter.) No doubt that term might be open to ridicule, and gentlemen were welcome to laugh as much as they pleased, but to him it had a meaning. (“Hear, hear,” and renewed laughter.) Each little organism, even the smallest insect had a selective affinity for the substance or the gas that would nourish it, and he did not believe that God had left the human soul without such selective affinities likewise. He believed that if they left them freer to operate they would find them in the long run on the whole to operate and to approach something like infallibility. Pardon him if he added this—You need not fear that any but those who love you will strive to adhere to your fellowship. The Congregational Union had no rewards or temptations to offer them except spiritual sympathy and

affection, and as long as people loved them and desired to be associated with them, why should they wish to cast them off? If they should hold opinions that appeared dangerous, could not the power of the truth overcome them? They could not prevail against the truth. He did not wish to say any more. He was surrounded by men whom he had known and revered from his infancy. He had met that morning in the assembly a man from whose lips first came home to his heart the quickening Word of God, as he verily believed it to be, and much as he deplored what that gentleman considered a departure from standards that he held sacred, yet his (Mr. Picton's) heart was just what it was when as a little child he listened to that man, and his heart burned within him. Mark this, that he was not alone. In their charges and in their families there were young people who read the *Contemporary Review*, the *Nineteenth Century*, and perhaps even the *Fortnightly Review*, and perhaps they gradually drank in a sort of uneasiness that was not to be cured by any resolution of the Congregational Union. But if they succeeded in convincing them that they could never even temporarily surrender their intellectual belief in certain statements of facts without at the same time surrendering their heartfelt love of God and sympathy with the Lord Jesus, then they would do them a cruel injury, and it would be far better to leave them to struggle through freely with their sympathy, and with the health of the Spirit of God within them; but if the Union put their seal to such resolutions as these, then they would do more than merely affirm what nobody doubted—namely, that the Congregational Union was Evangelical in sentiment, for they would also cast a shadow, a forbidding shadow, upon the path of many suffering and struggling souls who feared to give up their living faith, but who could not reconcile their scientific instruction and their historical knowledge with the external framework in which that living faith had been embodied. In conclusion, he would say that all concerned in the Leicester Conference would be ready to express regret that unintentionally they had given any sort of pain and uneasiness to the members of this Union. (Hear, hear.) When it was first brought before the Conference in Leicester they had not the remotest notion of causing any uneasiness; but, looking back and seeing what had occurred, he for one could not help thinking with regret that the meeting should have been held at that time.

The Rev. EUSTACE CONDER said if anything was required to justify the Union in bringing forward the resolutions, it was the opportunity that had been given to Mr. Picton to stand on that platform, and speak as he had done in thorough manliness as well as deep feeling; and he was sorry to find that even a single voice of protest should be raised, or that his remarks should have awakened laughter, since his position must have been one full of pain, and ought therefore to have commanded respectful sympathy. In regard to the resolutions, he almost felt disposed to second the amendment made by Dr. Parker, though he did not care very much as to which was passed. If the resolutions were intended to set forth a creed it must be agreed on all hands that they were a desperate failure; but it was not so intended. It was intended to say “we have a character before the world, and we wish it to stand clear. We have a traditional reputation among the churches, and we do not wish even the shadow of a misunderstanding to gather over it.”

The debate was then adjourned until the meeting on Friday; and it was announced that instead of holding the meeting on that day at the Memorial Hall, it would be held again at the Union Chapel at Islington, at 10 a.m.

PEACE OR WAR.

The Rev. W. STATHAM then moved a resolution offering the strong conviction of the assembly that the jealous attitude of the British Government towards Russia, and the extensive war preparations being made, menaced the peace of Europe; that such a course, despite the pacific speeches of certain members of the Government ceased to command the confidence, or allay the apprehensions of the country; that the ordering of Indian troops to Malta had excited indignation, and was a dangerous if not unconstitutional innovation; that the present state of things, abounding in rumours of war, hindered the revival of the commercial prosperity of the country, and produced widespread distress; that, therefore, the Assembly called on all the churches of the Union to employ every legitimate effort to urge on the Government the imperative duty of entering into a Congress, so that a resolution might be formed of the perplexing problems which now disturbed Europe. (Hear, hear.) The speaker remarked that it was a terrible thing to bring Indian soldiers to fight the battles of England in Europe, and asked what would be thought if Russia had put into the field soldiers who had no direct association with that country, or if Germany had employed mercenaries in her war with France. Parliament ought to have been consulted on the question. He also alluded to the noble way in which some of the leaders of the Church of England had also spoken on this question, notwithstanding that to a great extent they were fettered in opinion by their connection with the State; and he especially mentioned the views which Canon Liddon had expressed in the pulpit of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Mr. Alderman LAW seconded the resolution, which was supported by the Rev. J. G. ROGERS, and carried by acclamation, after which the assembly adjourned to Friday next at 10 a.m.

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